

T/SDR/4/VB6

COMMUNISM

CENTRAL REVIEW IN ENGLISH OF THE INTERNATIONALIST COMMUNIST GROUP

**Dictatorship of the proletariat
for the abolition of salaried work !**

**DEATH
TO
DEMOCRACY !**

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This review is the work of militants of whom English is not their native language. It is by an essential care of internationalism that in spite of our weak forces we have taken the initiative to let comrades and sympathizers translate this first review. Therefore, we are fully aware of the various mistakes and imperfections of this review. It belongs to you, reader, to help us in order that the next review can be superior in quantity and quality.

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"It's constantly forgot that the suppression of the state is also the suppression of democracy, that the extinction of the state is also the extinction of democracy."

The State and the Revolution
Lenin

TO THE READERS

Comrade,

Such a review can not fully accomplish its task of guidance, to organise the communist action, without the active participation of its readers and sympathisers.

Any materiel, theoretical, critical contributions, ... is a help for us in the building of a real revolutionary tool.

Use these material ! They are nobody's property, they belong to the inheritance of the accumulated experience of a class that is alive, which fights to abolies its salaried condition and by that all class division, all exploitation. Report these texts, discuss them, reproduce them, ...

If our position interrests you, if you want to discuss it, work with us, make contact with the Internationalist Communist Group, by writing down the following address, without mentioning the group's name.

B.P. 54 - 1060 BRUXELLES 31 - Belgique.

If you want to get to know more about our programmatic positions, we give you the following subscription of our reviews :

LE COMMUNISTE, French central organ of I.C.G.

(published three times a year)

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(I) | .. Commentaires des Thèses sur
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(II) |
| - Nous soulignons | - Les prisons contre le prolétariat |
| - Quelques aspects de la question du logement (II) | - Quelques aspects de la question du logement (III) |
| - Mémoire ouvrière : La dictature du prolétariat et la la question de la violence (Octobre n°5 - 1939) | - Nous soulignons |

Comunismo n°12 is based on the criticism of work.

Comunismo n°13 is based on the appreciation of the struggles in Latin America.

Also read: Action Communiste, I.C.G. publication in Belgium; Parti de Classe, I.C.G. publication in France; El Boletín, Comunismo supplement for Spain; Comunismo, central organ of I.C.G. in Portuguese.

PRESENTATION

1. These few lines are to explain briefly and schematically the existence of our group, its role and its duties, and to clarify the reality from which the group extends as an active agent. This text intends as well to outline the historical chain of events to which it owes its programmatic basis and the general outlooks we aim at. Amongst those, the publication of the present review in a language... especially conceived for the avant-garde fraction of the proletariat using that language, which will fight for self-organization (or self-reorganization) as a class wherever it is.
2. Our group is the product of a still forming synthesis, of particular and regional direct experiments by the universal proletariat which annexes themselves to the ever standing work of the Communists - duty of directing, of centralising, etc. of fights, and of a comprehension of the global experience of the universal working class in its fight against Capital, systemised by the left communist fractions from which we inherit a materialistic, dialectic comprehension and a comprehension of the vital necessity to take an organized action towards the transformation of the world. Explaining our constitution implies : 1° opposing all fables that the bourgeoisie has constructed around the fantom of communism with the central axis of the communist movement that develops within and against Capitalism; outlining the revolution and counter-revolution forces precisely.
 - 2° to show the historical importance of the revolutionaries' action.
 - 3° to characterize the present situation.
 - 4° on this basis, reaffirm the permanent duties of Communists, hence ours.

CAPITALISM AND COMMUNISM

COUNTER-REVOLUTION AND REVOLUTION

The history of universal Capitalism is a history of exacerbation, of reinforcement of its contradictions and antagonisms. Each new expansion ens necessarily with an even more violent crisis that sets the entire planet ablaze. The capitalist solution to this crisis is always the same : the misery of the working class, austerity, forcing unemployment, banishment from the immediate process of production, centralising of State control, war-time economy, democratico-terrorist fortification of the State, destruction of all productive forces, imperialistic war. In front and against this, the proletariat fortifies itself by trying to affirm its communist programme : the fight against exploitation, the proletariat organization in a class, hence as a Party, the destruction of the bourgeois State, the proletariat dictatorship, the despotic destruction of the bourgeois production connections, the destruction of the infamous value law. Each crisis of the capitalistic growth is thus a manifestation of

a global social crisis, which materializes itself in the brutal surge of the contradictions between two antagonistic social projects : the conservation of Capital, which is necessarily counter-revolutionary, and the revolution, which imposes itself, expands and becomes a general revolution or else it is destroyed.

The bourgeois "solution" to the crisis of Capital is by its very essence partial and limited in time. The development of capitalism that such a "solution" permits necessarily develops the proletariat, fortifies and concentrates it.

The rhythm of the new expansion determines the level of the new crisis, the development of its antagonisms and the affirmation of its decomposition : the new revolutionary wave.

The communist solution to the crisis is necessarily universal, definite, and it does not imply minimising or abolishing the effects of capitalism but abolishing capitalism in itself. The point is not in proposing an improvement of salaries or a better administration of society, but in developing class warfare in order to abolish the system of paid labour. The communist solution does not pertain to democratize the State but to annihilate it completely. One must ascertain that, despite the proletariat's enormous efforts aiming at extending its revolution, the counter-revolution has succeeded up to now in making that process fail, which simultaneously and inseparably permitted the physical and political destruction of the bastions of the "avant-garde" workers.

Contrarily to what the bourgeoisie wants us to believe about the most glorious class counter class conflict ever conducted by the proletariat in the whole world, there is nothing left to the proletariat but the accumulated experience. If today it is essential to repeat such tautologies (as communists-internationalists), it is because the counter-revolution imposing itself in the whole world (particularly materialised by the butchery that was the second world war) still keeps an enormous dominance at all levels, specifically the ideological one. The ideological reproduction expresses itself in multiple ways. One of them allows to reconcile the interests of all the different fractions of bourgeoisie : it is the "Three Worlds Theory". This ideology aims at dividing the world proletariat. According to this theory, there would exist a first capitalistic and developed world, where the workers do not need to fight for a communist revolution but for the defence of democracy, for "social" institutions and for the reform of structures (nationalization, self-administration, etc.). There would be a second world, a "socialist" one, where there is no need to fight for the socialist revolution either (as it is already accomplished). It would take only to improve socialism by enforcing a series of democratic reforms or strictly political revolutions.

It is evident that in the third world, revolution cannot be accomplished as it refers to "under-developed"; "pre-capitalistic" countries, where it would be utopic to desire anything else than to fight for the national liberation, as well as relying on the national democratic fraction of the bourgeoisie in its struggle against under-development and imperialism. In short, submitting the proletariat to "progressive" and "nationalistic" fractions of the capital permanently, thus maintaining its disorganization as a class.

All distinctions operating from that mutual basis stem from the fact that the bourgeoisie, by the essence of its regime - competition - is confronted non-stop with an inner conflict-

ing of interests.

The bourgeois unification, the centralization, the State, the State constellations, the international under-State control never take their stand on the elimination of contradictions inside the union, but exist only in order to confront, above these divisions and in the best possible conditions, the imperialistic commercial war and the class warfare. Thus, even if the whole bourgeoisie universally agrees with the "Three Worlds Theory" (which implies identifying socialism with nationalization and the atrophied development with extra-capitalism), when the real question is to put workers into the service of one or another organization in under-State control of the world capital (imperialistic constellations), the bourgeoisie always appears divided. Some will defend a socialist country, others will stress the atrocities of the repression in the same country; some will justify the NATO militaristic policy or that of China in the name of national supremacy, of democracy or/and of socialism; others will blame the Russian policy in Afghanistan, the Cuban policy in Africa, or the Vietnamese policy in Cambodia... it will always be in the name of democracy, self-determination of the people and socialism.

In the name of democracy too, some people will justify the policy of the "imperialistic Capital", which through the English, American, French... governments, guarantees the gruesome order of capitalism in Ireland, Central America, Africa, etc.

Other fighters for democracy will extend military help to the bourgeois fractions that on the occasion adopt the flag of national liberation, just like those who, in their own camps, take charge of maintaining the terrorist order of the organized capital (Poland, Mozambique, Angola...). In this case, there cannot be any agreement of any kind: each fraction of the capital fights for possessing the mystical flags that gave such good results during the second world war (democracy, national supremacy, antifascism...). Everyone tries to use the workers as cannon-fodder in his own camp of imperialistic capital. This is why it should be stressed that the capitalistic exploitation regime is universal.

Contrarily to the bourgeoisie, the proletariat has no homeland, it has no regional or sectarian interests to defend. It is just as absurd and reactionary to imagine that socialism could exist in one country only as to conceive capitalism in one country only. It is essential to repeat unceasingly that capitalism is only a transitory phase for all humanity and that its destruction will inevitably be universal. Even the denomination of our group contains a deliberate tautology : Internationalist Communist. It is clear that communism, in the true sense, contains internationalist practice, the abolition of money, of merchandise, of all States, of social classes. If today it is still necessary to point it out, it is because the impact of the Stalinist, of the democratic and fascist counter-revolutions is still enormous; and because the communist program, in spite of the large working masses that objectively fight for its affirmation, remains absolutely unknown in its theoretical expression and is burried and disfigured by the quicksand of capitalistic ideologies. Let's repeat what Marx and Engels stated a century ago : Communism is neither an ideal nor a series of receipts to be applied to reality, but a real movement of destruction of all established orders. The communist program does not

only consist in arms of criticism but also in criticism through arms. Its affirmation is at the same time the theoretical comprehension of the action and the action itself; its power is not solely derived from a materialistic comprehension of the world, it also implies a subversive revolutionary practice against the bourgeoisie society.

The essence of the proletarian fight, in all forms and periods of the capitalistic development, is essentially the same; the antagonism of the capitalistic society remains the same. The resolution of this antagonism cannot be the result of different "programs" but the result of the development and fortification of the movement of decomposition of capitalism; in other words, the communist movement, indivisible unity of objectives and means, practical affirmation of the proletariat as a universal autonomous class.

This is why in the phases of mounting revolutions, the importance of communist tasks can vary, thus assume different relative importances in periods of descending revolution. Still in periods of counter-revolution, the central axis of communists action is always the same : the practical defence of the program, the fight for the proletariat constitution as political force, structurised and centralised organically on the international level, that is to say the proletariat organised as a Party.

The mounting revolution characterises itself through the affirmation of the communist program in all society, which becomes concrete simultaneously in a) the brutal burst of the generalized crisis of the bourgeoisie's society;

b) in the unification and association of the proletariat for the organic centralization of its revolutionary action for which

with a communist direction by c) they endow themselves

d) facing the totality

of bourgeois fractions.

The descending phases are characterized by a) the imposition of social, economic and political conditions, which allow a new phase of capitalistic accumulation, hence the reconstitution of the bourgeoisie's society and the more or less stable surpass of the crisis

b) the proletariat's disorganization, by which special organic force becomes a conglomerate of "immediate" associations that abandons its class interests progressively, a conglomerate that is joined by a few isolated mass groups that try to even out the balance.

So, in these periods, we have a dispersal and physical disorganization (massacre, imprisonment, massive exile) and ideological recomposition of the bourgeoisie's mythology operating on the basis of the contents of the working class fight, in debasing and betraying the real content, in order to use it against the proletariat.

c) the repolarisation of the bourgeois society, which tends to use the workers as a manoeuvring mass and cannon-fodder.

To summarize, that is revolution : phase of unification, centralization, fortification of the working forces. And the counter-revolution as a phase of dispersal, atomisation of the same working forces with their consequences, struggle against exploitation or its development, either revolution or war, and the massacre of proletariat.

THE COMMUNIST FRACTIONS AND THEIR HISTORICAL NECESSITIES.

Revolution and counter-revolution, both expressions of the two classes of society, are still relative powers and realities until the destruction of capitalism.

The function of democracy, of the bourgeoisie organized as a State, is nevertheless to destroy, to disorganize and to recuperate all tentatives of autonomous association by the proletariat. Its permanent objective is to make organization of the proletariat as a party fail, or to deviate it. Yet it can neither destroy the work power that enables an enlarged reproduction of the capitalistic exploitation, nor eliminate the antagonisms that are deeply entrenched in it. It is therefore impossible to prevent manifestations of decomposition of the regime and the re-appearance of the working class associations, constantly stronger, firmer and more efficient. Each affirmation of the proletariat as a political power, in fact each affirmation of the communist program, of the communist revolution, is in general an important step forward. Each defeat inevitably underlines the weaknesses and incoherences of the movement, which are essential to comprehend before they can be surpassed. All failures of the revolution can be explained through absence or lack of material conciliations, amongst them one can take into account the absence of "conscience and will", two major distinctive elements in the party.

As to the proletarian point of view, the absence of conditions can be no pretext for inactivity and is not a sufficient explanation to put the blame for our defeat upon our enemies' attitudes. (Any party, pseudo-working class, "communist", socialist, Trotskyist or Maoist has "betrayed" the working class). It is the "A.B.C." of the fight that the enemy always uses any sly way within its power in order to win...

This is the reason why, from the proletarian point of view, the failures have to be explained through the own weaknesses of the movement - weaknesses achieving themselves through the unfinished affirmation of its constitution as a party. Clarifying such weaknesses and their axis, i.e. the causes, the forces, the mythos that have wrecked the process of constitution as a party, represents, in moments of disorganization and dispersal, in moments when the counter-revolution triumphs, the premises, the indispensable condition for any revolutionary practice.

Actually, the first reason for which revolution affirms itself on a higher level every time (1848, 1871, 1917-23) is that the antagonisms of capital are every time more unbearable while the proletariat is numerically stronger and more concentrated through the development of capital.

The second reason is that the voluntary action of one fraction of the proletariat assures a real programmatic continuity between every revolutionary wave in spite of the counter-revolution. If it excluded the voluntary action, which condenses and expresses the counter-revolution, and the revolution program, which assures the premises of the revolutionary staff formation, the proletariat would each time start its history again, repeating the same mistakes.

The policy of proletariat disorganization, of reproduction of the counter-revolutionary situation, is not only based

on the physical and martial repression, but also
1) the falsification and the negation of class struggle
2) using the proletariat leaders' names while distorting the contents of their actions
3) the use of terminology, expressions used by the revolutionaries are distorted as well, for the use of the counter-revolution
4) diffusion as being the revolutionaries's objective of a struggle wave passed the reforms and the democratisation of capital (and not its destruction.)

The intellectuals of the regime are specialists in revision, falsification, in the use of weaknesses in the formulations and explanations inherent in any failing revolution against its real targets : communism. To this, the proletariat opposes the work of the communist fractions, which through fighting against any revisionist falsification hindering the organization of the proletariat as a party and through pitiless criticizing, work patiently for the reconstitution of our class. This task of theoretical and programmatic affirmation implies:

- 1) the reconstitution of the history of the class fight that tends to assure the collective memory of the proletariat.
- 2) the theoretical formalisation (thesis) of the highest point of programmatic affirmation, which implies to analyze and to criticize the weaknesses and mistakes.
- 3) the fortification and development of its own organized form (the nucleus) assuming in actual fact the direct action against capital by deliberately operating in the organization and centralization of that action; in other words, forming, not only in its general orientations, but in the totality of the movement, the most decided part of the class : forming the indispensable nucleus of the communist party direction.

Today, in any part of the world, speaking of organized structure, of party, of centralization, of "avant-garde", brings about, even amongst the most pugnacious proletarians, an immediate negative reaction. They have had enough of hearing those who are the worst enemies of our class and of its fight talking about a "party", about organization and centralization. The necessary fight against those "socialist" and "communist" organizations has been turned by the counter-revolution into allergy against any organization form. But this is the ground of counter-revolution. The pure and simple denying of the organization is nothing but anarchy in the bosom of the working movement, but spontaneous and immediate movements, the predominance of the individual and his free will... thus the reproduction of democracy with its procession of demagogic, populism, etc... and above all with the permanent terrorist repression against all the proletariat fractions that want to organize themselves against this state of fact. This is always true, but even more in the periods of intense struggle, because "all through the periods of crisis the lack of direction is a crime against the party" (Marx). With their work of disorganization, the anti-parties make the work of the bourgeoisie easier and can be considered as objective part of it (we do not judge the people by what they think of themselves but by their practice).

To leave the ground of counter-revolution, the negation of this negation imposes itself : it is necessary for the criticism to transform itself into destruction, into the

fight to death against all the bourgeois forces, and into radically different proletarian organizations.(1) The communist organization is only radically different if it differentiates itself, from roots to head, of all the bourgeois organizations. It is the same antagonism that separates communism from those gentlemen's program, which generally consists in nationalizing, putting the production forces under State control, in other words, the capitalist State opposes the proletarian organization as a communist party to all the so-called organizations.

It is true that the lack of party is not a sufficient explanation for the reproduction of counter-revolution, because this "explanation" only displaces the problem, which becomes then: "Why was there no party? Why did the proletariat appear incapable of organizing itself as a party?..." And so, we would find ourselves again in front of the indispensable and ineluctable necessity to understand the material causes that did determine the past defeats and that continue to allow the triumph of the counter-revolution. But all attempts to break the vicious circle of counter-revolution are bound to be organized attempts as well as an indisputable work of the party.

(1) The same generally happens with politics. Disgusted with the permanent cheating of left and right parties, the proletariat rejects politics. A lot of proletarians talk about their "abandonment of politics"...as if we could decide. As if, by not involving ourselves in politics, we could stop it from working with us and against us... The proletariat is bound to involve itself in politics, and it will not go one step forward by denying politics individually. To deny it really, it would be necessary to deny it socially, in other words, to abolish it. But there is only one way to abolish it : this is revolution. And it can only be a political action : the social war, that can permit this revolution. The only way to criticize politics positively is to realize it. It is not enough to simply deny the bourgeois politics but it is necessary to deny the negation that is still imprisoned in its bosom.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

The extraordinary development made possible by the destructions of the "second" world war began to show its first limits in some parts of the world in the fifties, and since then the crisis has started again and we have been hearing the same speeches again about the necessity of "restrictions", of a "national effort" to increase the production, etc. In the same time, workers' struggles against that state of facts have started over. This was only the first sign of the cyclical crisis of the capital, to which some parts of the world are no more profitable. These regions have never recovered their former growth rhythm.

But those effects were distributed amongst the capitalistic areas in such a way that the economy continued to expand in some countries until the next signs of the crisis : 1960, 1974-75, 1981-82, which destroyed the mythology of a capitalism without generalized crisis definitely. In the fifties, the crisis could be kept back in some areas, in the sixties there were only a few places that did not feel its effects, and in the years 1974-75 and 1981-82, no country could stay out of it.

Moreover, the cycle of growth is always shorter between two depressions of the economic situation and it is always more ridiculous in its positive effects.

In the years 1983-85, the positive part of the cycle, on a world basis, will lead to almost no accumulation, unemployment will not be reduced even in that period, and the under-use of the productive capacity will not change. All this tells us that the hardest times of the depression are still to come.

In the end of the fifties and in the sixties the bourgeois answer to the crisis (direct increase in the exploitation rate, reduction of real salaries) carried on its anti-worker brutality in the most affected areas in the world and was presented as the exclusive policy of some fractions of the capital (1), but from the years 74-75, it could no more be presented as the monopoly of some "barbarian" fractions of the bourgeoisie : it is, without any exception, the policy of all fractions of the capital in all the countries of the world.

Today, the blocking of salaries, the increase in prices, the battle of production and the "national effort to increase production", together with the necessary state terror, do not only characterize Argentina, Poland, West Germany, Italy, Cuba and Chile any more but also hit the whole world, including the big centres of international capitalism : the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

From the bourgeois point of view a new expansion is only possible with rebuilding. The imperialistic war, which, in fact, never ceased since the "second" world war, tends more and more to expand on the whole planet. Once more, we can witness the dramatic cycle of capitalism : expansion-crisis-generalized war-reconstruction-expansion-crisis (2)...

Today like yesterday the only prospect is either a general war, or a communist revolution. Today like yesterday, the communist order is to oppose a revolutionary war against the bourgeoisie (our own one and all the others) to the imperialistic war.

The victory of the world communist revolution is only possible by eliminating the past weaknesses. That means

that the proletariat must understand its past experiments identify its mistakes in the big struggles and fight with all its force against all the ideologies that succeeded in disarming it in the past.

The class struggle has never stopped in spite of the failure of many rebellions for the last years, but the counter-revolutionary period that started after 1917-1923, the longest and the hardest the proletariat ever experienced, is still dominating today. The generalization of the world crisis starts only now to wake up the revolutionary class from its long sleep. This process is slow and is limited to some areas (specially in the fifties). The capital tries to beat the proletarian country by country but it will not be able to stop the general rebirth of revolutionary movements on a larger and higher scale (in quantity and quality) as in the 1967-1983 period everywhere in the world. The difference in the world share of the crisis brings about differences in the timing of the counter-revolutionary attacks, in their means and their tactics against the proletariat, and this leads to uncoordinated answers of the proletariat in time and intensity.(3)

The bourgeoisie makes use of it to isolate each struggle in "its own" country. Obviously the situation of the working class is different in every part of the world and so is the class struggle. But the crisis of capital is a world-wide one and it shows more and more the anti-worker contents of all states, whatever the means, the myths and the tactics used by the bourgeoisie to force the proletariat to digest the crisis. Whatever the form, the phase and the intensity of the proletarian struggle in the world are, its contents and its perspective are communist and world-wide. Any revolutionary action, even if it meets problems of coordination in time, tactics and intensity, can never lose the perspective of the world-wide struggle of the two opposed classes. For example, it would mean suicide to ignore the fact that in some areas, the counter-revolution situation is the hardest the proletariat has ever known in its whole history (4). The breakthrough cannot be confined to some areas but it will be the result of explosions in the areas where the proletariat of this generation has not been defeated. One must always remember that the main point is the international situation of the proletariat and not its counter-revolutionary submission in some parts of the world.

Between the bourgeois policy of dividing the proletariat and the generalization of the historical crisis of capital, there is a dialectical tension : proletarian defeats in some parts of the world sometimes have serious consequences on the world-wide struggle, but today workers' struggle against the general policy of austerity and intensification of work, cannot be confined inside any frontier. This leads to the world-wide revolutionary struggle. This is the perspective of our class, this is the communist perspective.

(1) Once more, the names of "right" and "left" cannot help to understand anything; in South America, it is the so-called "right" that puts this kind of policy into practice, while the so-called "left" is in the opposition; in the Eastern countries it is supposed to be the contrary. In fact, there is no real question of right and left, there is only the necessity to let the

government carry on its policy and in the same time to present a bourgeois opposition to this policy. The economic decisions are dictated to the bourgeoisie by the state and the only solution left to the bourgeoisie is to use them in the war it conducts between bourgeois fractions or mostly in the war it conducts against the proletariat. The same bourgeois fraction can once "defend the working class interests" and the next time "take its responsibilities towards the gravity of the situation".

- (2) Here, the notion of "crisis" does not only mean depression but also the signs of the historical crisis of capital, the successive depressions, always stronger and closer to each other.
- (3) The struggle of the 1967-1973 period, for example, meant in some parts of the world the rebirth of struggles and in other parts the highest point of a battle that had been lasting for more than twenty years.
- (4) Areas where the most disgusting exploitation conditions are imposed on the proletariat : reduction of real salary of more than 50 %, slaughter of all communist avant-garde, etc. But this, of course, will not enable the bourgeoisie to escape the crisis.

THE INTERNATIONALIST COMMUNIST GROUP AND THE "COMMUNISM" REVIEW.

With the foundation of the I.C.G., we organize ourselves internationally to contribute to the process of constitution of the proletariat as a class and therefore as a party. Our general action belongs to the general prospect of the communists of all times, this is why our organization does not aim at founding a "distinct party facing other worker parties" (Manifest) but at creating an active, conscious, voluntary agent of the enormous task of organizing the proletariat in a world class party.

As the communists have "no interests but those of the proletariat as a whole" and as "they do not have any particular principles through which they intend to model the proletarian movement", we do not claim that we have the exclusive property of the "communist revolutionary program" and we do not call ourselves "the Party". But our structure corresponds to the historical necessity for the proletariat to do the tasks that have always characterized the avant-garde communist fractions, which "differ from the other proletarian parties in the fact that they defend the interests of the proletariat as a whole" without any distinction of nationality; on the other hand, in the different phases of the struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie, "they always represent the interest of the whole movement" and they are always "the most determined fraction, the one that pushes all the rest forward" (Manifest).

The tendency of the proletariat to organize itself as a class, as a world party, is determined by the general conditions of salaried exploitation, the general interests deriving from it and is reinforced by the present crisis of the capital.

But the lack of communist direction of the movement has stopped the development of collective class memory. Each worker struggle still carries the signs of weakness and hesitation the communists have pointed out for over a century. The analysis of all these failures would be a decisive weapon but it is still lying under the counter-revolutionary dust. Any struggle must take into consideration the lessons carried by the proletarian memory.

Despite all the efforts of the communist fractions that during and after the defeat of the most important revolutionary wave of all times, broke with the Third International, which was already fully corrupted, we haven't recovered our class memory yet. During the years preceding the second world war, the Italian left communists, with the "Prometeo" and "Bilan" reviews, made the most important attempt in this sense.

Our group, recently founded (1979), tries to contribute actively to the fulfillment of this task. We try to restore the history of our class, in continuing the work started by the communist fractions, in demonstrating the continuity of the communist program in time and in space.

We would like to point out two important things :

- 1) This necessary task is bound to the other ones, so our militants act in the country where they are, in the limits of our forces, in the struggle of our class against the capital.
- 2) If our weak forces do not disperse themselves, it is

because we are sure that the historical necessities of our class tend to let the fractions of the proletariat, which, all over the world, defend the communist program, converge into an organic central structure.

We are anti-sectarian, our will is to discuss, exchange information, strengthen the contacts between the worker groups, make common actions against the capital, get a narrow international community of work and tend to form the international communist party. But all this should not be mixed up with any democratic tendency. The practice of our class is basically anti-democratic and all the steps heading to a revolution were made possible because some structured minorities took no account of any majority consultation or any democratic principle. One of the most important lessons of the counter-revolution is that democracy is not only a mode of reproduction and a weapon of the bourgeoisie, but is also a poison within the working class organizations : trade-unions, councils, soviets, parties, internationals. That is because, as Marx saw it, democracy is not only a superior form of the capital domination, but the contents of domination in a generalized mercantile society (see the article "The Myth of democratic rights and liberties").

This domination process is based on the dissolution of classes into a sum of individual-buyer-seller-worker-citizen. Among the tasks of our international organization, there is the publication of the following reviews :

"Le Communiste", central review in French
"Communismo", " " in Spanish
A central review in Arabic
"Parti de Classe", local review in France
"Action Communiste", " " in Belgium
"Boletin", " " in Spain.

We also publish this review "Communism" with our limited means, for all the minorities of proletarians who understand English and who try to break with the framing imposed on them by all parties and trade-unions of the capital, and who try to organize themselves to defend their class interests. To do so, it is necessary to establish the programmatic experiments of the previous revolutions.

Our diffusion will be limited because of our weak forces, and the periodicity of the review will not be regular. This is why we will stay at a high abstraction level. We cannot assert that this review answers to all the struggle requirements and leads the workers' fight directly. But we think that an English review that combines propaganda and theoretical analysis is capable of helping the constitution of an organ of centralization and organization that gathers the working class forces over the frontiers the bourgeoisie tries to set between us.

Therefore we ask our readers not to receive this review and the other publications of our group as a merchandise to be consumed quickly and passively, but to help us to improve its contents: by sending informations about the workers' struggles, publications of other proletarian groups, analyses of the strength relations between classes, unknown historical texts; by criticizing our review and by helping to diffuse it (by having each number read by others, by making a subscription, by selling the review, etc.).

AGAINST THE MYTH OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES !

"To delegate is to give up any possibility of direct action. The so-called "supremacy" of democratic laws is nothing but an abdication, mostly for the benefit of rascals".
Battaglia Comunista - 1951.

The proletariat, in its tendency to organize itself in an autonomous class, needs to meet, to develop its press, to unite, to carry on strikes, to occupy factories, to organize direct action, to liberate confined comrades, to get arms. These tasks have been assumed with different results in all the periods of its historical fight, independently of the type of domination of the bourgeoisie : Bonapartist or parliamentary, republican or fascist.

The bourgeoisie's policy towards the proletariat consists in showing these needs as identical to all democratic institutions and liberties (free press, free association, amnesty...). It is not only the classical liberal bourgeois who try to convince us that democracy is the best, but also all the pseudo-working class parties (socialist, Stalinian, Trotskyist...) which base their counter-revolutionary policy on the statement that the working class will reach socialism through the conquest and the defence of all those rights and liberties.

In fact, there is a basic opposition between the mass of bourgeois democratic liberties and the needs of the proletariat to get organized in its own class field. The positions the proletariat conquers in this field can never be mixed up with the so-called "working class liberties".

In the same way as two opposite classes exist, there are two fundamental conceptions of the workers' struggle. One is bourgeois, where one criticizes the lack of equality, of democracy, where one should fight for more rights and liberties. The other is proletarian, based on the understanding of the fact that the roots of all those liberties, rights and equalities, are essentially of anti-worker type. This leads to the total practical destruction of the democratic state with its equalities, rights and liberties. These two opposite concepts show the contradiction between, on one hand, the passive criticism - to improve, reform, and in this way, reinforce the exploitation system - and, on the other hand, the active criticism, our criticism - the destruction of that exploitation system.

When the "right" tells us that the "left" is dictatorial and anti-democratic, that when the "left" reaches the government it does not respect the human rights and that our interest is therefore to wave the

flag of democracy, to fight under its protection for pure democracy, is it a myth or do they have an objective interest in democracy ? When the left tells us in the name of "Marxism" that the "bourgeoisie" and "capitalism" do not respect democratic liberties, that we have to defend them against fascist attacks, that we have to crave them wherever they do not exist, that this is the way to socialism, is it only a mass of opportunistic slogans or are they really fighting for democracy ?

The bourgeoisie always tried to use the proletariat (then atomized workers, taken as isolated "citizens") as a social basis, as slaves to serve its own dominant class interests. In this way, we already understand in what way the bourgeoisie always tries to make the workers fight for a different interest than their own (this answers partly to the question). But do the bourgeoisies of left and right want democracy or not ? The tale of liberties and human rights, is it only a mystification without any material basis or is there an objective reality that produces this democratic mystification ? Do we have to infer that no bourgeoisie fraction has any interest in having these rights and liberties of the citizens applied ? (The corollary to this would be that the proletariat could avoid the bourgeoisie's domination if it really fought for the defence of democracy). Or do we have to conclude to the contrary, that the fight of capitalists for the paradise of democratic rights is really the supreme will of the bourgeoisie ?

Of course, the revolutionary marxist criticism we develop here is based on this last thesis : the mass of human rights and liberties correspond exactly to the ideal form of reproduction of capitalistic oppression. Let's see what this ideal form of democracy is and where it comes from.

THE PARADISE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES.

The party of order, the general party of the capital, or in other words, all the bourgeois parties, is totally unable to face the proletariat organized as a class and therefore as a party. That is why the main secret of capitalistic domination is to stop the organization of the proletariat in an autonomous force and there is nothing more efficient for the bourgeoisie than the mass of human rights and liberties to drown the working class, to dissolve it in the false concept of "people". When the proletariat stops existing as a class, when each worker is a good citizen, with his liberties, rights and duties, he accepts all the rules of the game that atomizes him and drowns him in the mass where his specific class interests disappear. As a good citizen, he does not exist as a class, this is the condition for democracy to work out.

But the reign of democracy as both "left" and "right" promise in the name of socialism and/or liberty, where there would be no classes but just citizens and free people, as any ideological form of the bourgeoisie, does not come from nowhere and does not remain just as a pure idea outside the real world. On one hand, this world, "earthly paradise" of human rights, obeys to a very precise material reality : the reign of circulation of goods from which all the defenders of the capital draw their principles and conclusions; on the other hand, all the mental forms, ideologies, which derive from this reign are accepted by society and are therefore objective. The dissolution of the working class in the dead world of citizenship is nothing immaterial, even if it is based on the mystification of merchandise. One could think that the millions of pages written by marxologists and other capitalistic lawyers,... the capitalistic state constitutions, the charts, the speeches,... only serve passively the bourgeoisie, whether it takes

them into account or not according to circumstances. But this vision forgets that these very papers reflect and strengthen reality, that they belong to the dominant ideology, which becomes a material force that reinforces and reproduces the whole society system. The laws and other official papers are just ideological products of capitalistic dictatorship which have the task to defend it.

In the sphere of circulation of goods, there are no classes; everybody is a citizen, everybody appears as buyer and seller of goods, equal, free and owner. Even when we buy or sell our own manpower, we are in the paradise of human rights and liberties. Each one is aiming at his own private interests in the reign of equality, liberty and private property.

Liberty : because the buyer and the seller of goods (including manpower) do not obey to any other rule than to their own free will.

Equality : because in the world of merchandise, everybody is a buyer and a seller, and everybody gets a value equal to the value contained in the goods he is selling, exchanging equivalent against equivalent.

Property : because each one appears, in the world of exchange, as an owner of his merchandise and he can only dispose of what belongs to him.

As free and equal owners, all citizens contract relationships giving rise to a natural brotherhood, which is the lawful reflect that guarantees liberties, equality and the identical possibility for each man to own goods. Any buying or selling of merchandise is the result of a free will contract between men who, because of the merchandise, are owners, free, equal and like brothers.

It is this fetish world of merchandise, where there is no place for classes but only for men and citizens, that brings about the rights and liberties that enable them to decide of the regulation and improvement of this world. It is not only authorized to vote and to choose as a citizen, but it is also possible to have one's delegates in democratic organs for which the liberty of gathering, press, association, expression, etc. are guaranteed. The citizens can associate as electors and eligible (in the bourgeois parties) or as buyers and sellers of merchandises (in the trade-unions). Nothing is more natural for the citizens than to found political parties, to try to work in the government, in the ministeries, the parliaments, or the "soviets". No need for any nobility certificate as a citizen, anyone, whatever his social position (of which the laws never speak), can become a deputy, a minister or a president. In the same way, as buyers or sellers of goods, they can associate and syndicate, refuse to buy or sell if the deal is not good enough. To this corresponds another mass of rights and liberties as the ones which rule private societies and the pseudo-workers' trade-unions. The buyers and sellers of man-power, associated as such (never as workers or as capitalists, since nobody owns anybody else's work in the world of circulation of goods) can even interrupt the delivery of the work value : it is the liberty of strike. In the same way, the citizen who buys this merchandise can decide to buy another one, it is the liberty of work. Or the citizen can decide to stop buying this merchandise : it is the liberty of industry (under this reign, there is no lock-out.) Let us not forget the rights of prisoners, or general amnesty, which can only exist on condition that everybody behaves himself as a good citizen, a good buyer and a good seller, as it is said by "Amnesty International" and other humanists.

Some people will point out that nowhere such rights and liberties can be found, that everywhere there are prisoners, everywhere the right of strike is limited, that in this country the right of property is limited or in that country only one party is allowed, etc. All this is obvious. Nevertheless, in all these countries, there is a fraction of the bourgeoisie that will criticize the lack of democracy of different governments, and to do so, it must have a democratic ideal as reference. This is exactly what we want to explain and denounce. It is the only way to break with the bourgeois criticism of democracy and to recognize the enemy in all the defenders of pure and perfect democracy. Indeed, as well as democracy is the product and the reflect of the mercantile basis of the capitalistic society, it is also the reference of all the bourgeois criticisms which only aim at correcting the imperfections of democracy and where all the forces of counter-revolution concentrate in the periods of revolutionary crisis.

But is it possible that the bourgeois ideology could really imagine such a society, where there would be no prisoners because no one would steal and because no worker group would organize itself, where any strike would be strictly legal, where any association would group buyers and sellers to make sure the goods would be exchanged at the right price? Of course, yes. More than two hundred years ago the democrats had no problem in recognizing that the democratic republic should correspond to the "people of gods" as Rousseau said. Today the bourgeoisie, in its decomposition, is still unable to understand the limits of its historical perspective and holds on to its mystical ideas. If it found the need and the capacity to integrate all the religions it used to fight yesterday in the name of science, if it has now sanctified "Marxism-Leninism" that it used to attack yesterday, how can we doubt that it does not "honestly" long for the democratic paradise it has always fought for?

Man imagines god as a perfect image of himself, purified from all his contradictions. The capital imagines a perfect and everlasting reign because it is convinced that it is the positive pole of society, also purified from its contradictions (wealth/misery, growth/obstacle to the development of productive forces, "development"/"under-development", equality/oppression). It only sees itself identical to its positive pole (wealth, growth, equality, liberty, democracy...). For example, it has a completely un-historical and mystical conception of the valorization of the capital, as if it could exist without periodical massive destructions of social productive forces. Even if it calls itself socialism or communism, the capital always builds its own categories, its own analysis, its own vision of the world, ignoring the unity and the deadly contradiction between salaried work and capital. One can therefore not be surprised that in this democratic world, no one is exploited, no one is imprisoned, that one can find only capital, wealth, equality, justice, growth and liberty.

THE CONTRADICTORY UNITY OF REALITY.

Let us leave now the world of ideas and of capitalistic categories, of circulation and of citizenship, and let us return to the everyday world, the one of production and of capital valorization. The seller of working force is a worker, whether he believes in god or in democracy. In the factory he is nobody's equal, he is free of nothing, owner of nothing, not even of what he manipulates. If he wants, the worker can imagine that his citizenship is only interrupted, that his qualities, liberties and properties have been left in the cloak-room and that he will get them back when he gets out. But he is completely wrong. In his eight (or more) hours of work, he consumes raw material and machines to produce usage values that remain

property of the capital and in the other sixteen hours, during his holidays, he consumes food, beer, football or television to produce another usage value: his working force, which will be used only in valorizing the capital. Outside of the mystical and ephemeral paradise of circulation and of free elections, the worker remains a worker, whether he likes it or not; even when he fucks (whether by pleasure or to grow a family) he is only working force and valorization of the capital. As such, he is neither equal, nor free, nor citizen, nor owner at any moment of his life. He is only a salaried slave. Even before he tries to organize himself to defend his worker's interests, he has already all equality, property and liberty against him.

But to penetrate into the real meaning of the mass of bourgeois rights and liberties, one must not only shift from the circulation sphere to the production sphere (in their contradictory unity) but also reach the essence of the class contradictions in the society. In this way, we understand that the first liberty of the proletariat is to be free from all property. In fact, the ancestors of the proletariat have been liberated by physical violence of any other property than that of their children and of their own working force. This liberty of all properties is the most important one. It determines all the other ones. Thanks to this liberty, the proletarian is not only free to sell his working force, but also free to die of hunger (he and his children), if he does not find a buyer. The equality under the reign of circulation of goods gives the worker the right to receive a value equal to the one of his working force and it is precisely this equality that takes away from him the product of his own work and warrants the capitalistic exploitation. Brotherhood is not a meaningless bourgeois slogan. It meant, practically, the brotherhood of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat; under the form of national and democratic fraternity, it helped tying hands and feet of the workers to their exploiters and bringing them to the massacre of class-brothers on the imperialistic battle-fields.

The true liberty, property and fraternity of democracy implies therefore a permanent situation of anti-proletarian violence. Repression is one of the indispensable elements of imposition, reproduction and extension of democracy. A long time ago, Marx used to denounce the sacred trinity "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" as equivalent to "Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery". Even more, the paradise of pure democracy -where no one would complain of these liberty, equality, property, fraternity- implies a higher level of realization of democracy, which also implies the full use of the terroristic machine of the democratic state with its various forms. For that, for example, there is no organic change between the liberal and the fascist form of the state, but only a process of purification of the state in its tendency to reach the inaccessible democracy.

Let us now examine some other democratic rights and liberties: The right of election means that every 4,5,6,7... years, the worker can dress as a citizen to go and choose his oppressors freely. That supposes of course, on one hand, a free electoral campaign, that means the liberty for each bourgeois fraction to invest in it following its means and, on the other hand, the liberty for the others to imagine that society might change with the coming of such and such party at the head of the bourgeois government. The so-called rights and liberties even give the workers the "privilege" to choose between the self-named "worker parties" to choose the one that will be the most capable of directing the state of the capital and to organize the massacre of the proletarians who would tend to ignore the directives of the big "worker" parties and who would refuse what the majority has decided.

The liberty of press and propaganda insures simply the free market in such a way that only the economic potential and the financial capacity of the different parties would assume the control and domination of public opinion and would guarantee the free application of the majority principle. In front of this economico-political apparatus of the dominant class, the workers have as alternative : either the liberty, right and duty to resign themselves, either the force and the will to organize themselves as a class, for which no right or liberty will ever be conceded.

"We theoretically agree that democracy is the domination system of the bourgeoisie", so would the socialists, the Stalinians, the Trotskyts, etc. answer, "but what we must do now is to fight for the rights and liberties that serve the organization of the working class : right of reunion, of syndical action, of strike, of amnesty for political prisoners,... each time fascism attacks them. "What you don't understand", they would say, "is that we cannot fight for socialism without these rights."

Evidently, the capital hides that "theory" very well, but let us examine the practice of the rights and liberties contained in the program these so-called parties call "minimum" or transitory (of all these rights we will only examine those that are supposed to be "workers' rights").

"The right of reunion, of association, of syndicalization, the liberty of press are rights granted to the workers, they are conquests of the working class". So speaks the bourgeoisie (of left and right). After having produced value every day for the capital, wearing out their force, their arms, their brains, their sweat, their blood... their lives, the workers do not only have the right to go and watch football or get drunk at the bar to divert themselves, to be in a good shape and be good at work the next day, but also, the bourgeoisie gives them the right to discuss, to syndicate and to send their "delegates" negotiate the price at which they will sell themselves. It is very logical that a seller tries to sell his merchandise at high price and the capital admits that the trade-unions change the unreasonable claims of the workers into "righteous salary claims". These "righteous claims" are those that permit an increase in the exploitation rate, big enough to compensate the reduction of the profit rate. And it is even considered "legitimate" by all the bourgeoisie as long as it does not touch the national economy. There is no doubt that the trade-unions are the best specialists to formulate these "right" and "legitimate" claims that do not hit the profit of the capital. What else can we find in these rights granted by the bourgeoisie ? NOTHING, absolutely nothing more.

In front of a real worker's association defeding the worker's interests really, fighting for a real reduction of work time, for a real increase in relative salaries, the capital has no interest in accepting the right of association, of reunion, of press, of syndicalization, because these rights would necessarily attack the profit rate and the national economy. And then, democracy would not have any other alternative than to use its cops and syndicat troops. ... The parties never hesitate in using white terror against the workers' class movement, and always in the name of democracy and liberty, of the right to work, of the respect of the trade-union's decisions... Without any doubt, the same thing will happen every time the workers' association will become a school for communism, every time the question of socialism will stop being a question of words and a struggle will be carried on, not only for the increase in salaries, but for the abolition of salaried work.

It must be very clear that the workers' associations, their press, their reunions and actions,... that are only based on the immediate and historical interests of the proletariat, must fight openly against the capital and its national economy. And in the name of the respect of legal syndicats, of the struggle against subversion, of the unity against provokers, of the defence of the national security, it is precisely these so-called liberties that will be used as repressive force against the class organization.

And this practice is very coherent with democracy. The repression is democratic because it strikes when the workers leave their uniform of citizenship to act as a class, when they stop accepting to be the well disciplined army of revalorization of the capital, for which the capital had given them these rights and liberties.

This proves that contrarily to what the bourgeoisie says, no right is granted to the working class when it acts as a class. These rights are only granted to the citizens, sellers of goods. The repressive terror for all those who do not accept to behave as good citizens, answers very logically to the bourgeois ideal of democratic paradise. There is no democratic paradise for those who do not respect democracy. As soon as the proletariat, organized as a class, tries to attack the capitalist dictatorship, democracy shows its terrorist face; as long as its dictatorship holds on firmly, democracy can show its liberal face to the stupid mass. This nice face of rights and liberties is therefore reserved only for the citizen, the one who bows down peacefully in front of the daily violence of the capitalist production system : the salaried work.

The same thing happens with the right of strike. The left wing of the bourgeoisie tells us that it has value against the capitalist superstructure. No right is ever given to the class, to the workers in their struggle, they are only given to the sellers of goods. As long as the workers accept to continue being simply a force of valorization of the capital, they have all the rights to act as any seller of goods: to claim the right value of his merchandise, to refuse to sell, to stop delivering usage value, etc. And of course, on the other hand, we find the rights of the buyer : the liberty of work (which means stoppage, lock out, etc.) ... With this liberty, the workers are the ones who remain every day more exploited, and more enslaved.

And when they make a real strike without caring for any right or liberty, when they really attack the bourgeois interests, no right or liberty exists any more; they are accused of being provokers, or agents coming from abroad..., the true class-strike is declared illegal, savage, anti-syndical,... which in fact it is. Consciously or not, any class struggle must fight against the legality of the reign of merchandise and must fight for its destruction.

And to do so, it cannot accept sheep, nor syndicats, nor the right to work, nor the right to strike. On the battlefield, when the workers fight against the trade unions at the service of the capital, they have no right at all. One must be blind or naive to believe the legalization of the strikes, which does not come from us but from our enemies, gives us any guaranty to win it or to protect us against the state repression. To the contrary, the legalization of the strikes is a way of the bourgeoisie to reduce the class strength of the strikes.

Another example is the "amnesty for political prisoners" requested by all the social democrats, pacifists, Trotskyts, humanists, priests of any imperialist side, but only at the condition they are made prisoners by a state of the other imperialist side. Each state keeps its own prisoners and, in the same time, asks for the liberation of its neighbour's, in the name of the human rights of course. Besides,

the humanists only claim to care for political prisoners at a time when international conventions such as the "European Judiciary space" relegate all actions of proletarian violence to the rank of "common law delinquency".

The funniest of all is that their campaigns (committees for Chilean, Argentinian, Salvadorian exiles, supporter groups for the RAF, the IRA, etc.) only aim at getting the signatures of humanist social democracies such as the German one, which does not retain many political prisoners since it has already eliminated most of them one by one. In any imperialist war, each state is ready to negotiate some human flesh against investments or goods. And they keep talking about "amnesty" and "human rights". We know that all this confusion is the exact opposite of the solidarity needed by all our imprisoned comrades. The only solidarity is the class solidarity, which does not exist through the humanist speeches, the game of human rights between the USA and the USSR, which cannot be obtained by protest letters addressed to the capitalist butchers to ask them to torture a little bit less. But it exists through the struggle against the bourgeoisie in each country. Only the direct action of the working class with its own means (strikes, sabotage of the national production, etc.) will permit us to impose its strength, to liberate the present workers who are imprisoned, but also to lay down the basis to organize its own class power, its own dictatorship that will blow away the history of all the states and all the prisoners.

As all the other rights and liberties, the legal amnesty has nothing to do with the workers' struggle to pull the comrades from the jails because as long as the capitalist exploitation system lasts, there will be prisoners and particularly, proletarian prisoners. One must not only know that there is no guaranty against prison and torture, but also that prison and torture will always be used in the name of the defence of these rights and liberties. In the same way that, under capitalism, every worker is potentially unemployed, any worker who does not accept the rules of the citizenship game is, potentially, a prisoner. Repression, torture, murder are only applications of democracy.

Moreover, the meaning of an amnesty is that the prisoners are "forgiven" for what they did. That means of course that they would deny the actions for which they have been condemned, or at least, that they would express that the actions that were valid yesterday are no more valid today. In this way, the amnesty permits, in the name of the "christian forgiveness", to recuperate actions that, originally, attacked the bourgeois state, and became, with the coming of another bourgeois fraction at the government, "actions that are exaggerated but understandable in the scope of the struggle against dictatorship..."

A good example of this is the amnesty conceded by the "young Spanish democracy". It mercied some "antifascist militants" above all to hide the fact that many imprisoned workers were fighting in the same time against Franco and against his antifascist cousins : in one word, against the whole bourgeois state. Some of the "anarchists" are still in the prisons that became "democratic" again.

For us, the liberation of our imprisoned class comrades can only be made by the claiming of their heroical actions. We do not hope for any grace or pity from a class that shows us daily that it never hesitates in accumulating millions of dead bodies to develop its "civilization". We know that only our organized and armed force can pull our comrades out of the fascist and antifascist prisons.

And this is true, precisely because our force is the continuation of these actions for which our comrades fell. This is why, not only we do not ask for an amnesty, but to the contrary, we claim the reasons for which they have been imprisoned. K. Marx already held this position when he answered to his judges : "We do not ask for any excuse nor any pity; do not expect any from us tomorrow".

In front of the capital, all proletarians are subversive. The fact of refusing to submit to its laws means, consciously or unconsciously, fighting for its destruction. This is why, with all the victims of the capital ("political" or "of common law"), we say : "We are all subversive. We are all guilty of wanting to destroy this inhuman world.

For all these reasons, the communist position about all the press, strike, reunion, amnesty liberties, about the legality, is to assert with no doubt that the organization of the proletariat is based on no right, no law, no liberty conceded by its enemy but to the contrary, is based on illegal action : the revolutionary organization for the destruction of salaried slavery. As Marx said : "We never kept this secret : the field on which we fight is not the legal one, but the revolutionary one."

That does not mean that we abandon a strike when it becomes legal, or that we do not publish and distribute revolutionary press when it can circulate legally or that we refuse to get out of prison when a judge sets us free. That would simply be reacting antithetically on the same legal field.

One must not identify illegality and clandestineness. Any real strike is illegal but not clandestine, even if there are secret preparations for it. The organization of workers in class movements - revolutionary councils, soviets... - stands on a completely illegal basis but it develops public activities. The best example of that is the destruction of the bourgeois army by the proletariat. When the soldiers unify with the rest of the working class, after a long work of communist secret propaganda, when they start using their weapons against the officers and destroy the capitalist army, they do not do it in a secret way, but openly, though it is the most illegal action one can imagine. To fight in the illegal field means assuming all the tasks, independently of all the democratic rights and liberties, which are only decisions of our enemy and therefore a strategy of the bourgeoisie to fight us.

"Correlation of forces between classes and juridical formalization of an unavoidable situation".

Let us listen once more to the lawyers of the capital : "We are Marxists and we know very well that all these rights are bourgeois democratic rights, but the bourgeoisie is incapable to concede them or to maintain them, we must impose them and obtain them by force. We must fight today for the right of strike, for the amnesty of political prisoners, the liberty of reunion, of election, of press, etc." Some others will say that "one must fight for the autonomy of the working class to carry on the permanent revolution" or that "it is only a step".

Have we ever seen a class that could stay autonomous, that could fight for its own class interests, while fighting in the same time for the purification of democracy, in other words, for the interests of its class enemies? This question finds no answer from the Trotskyists and the Stalinians. In their democratic vision of history,

the proletariat would not be the first class of history to be in the same time oppressed and revolutionary, but also the least autonomous and the most servile class of all history. While in their past revolts the slaves used to attack the slavery system and their masters, the serfs used to attack all the medieval institutions, the church and the lords; these "Marxists" say that the proletariat should struggle for bourgeois purposes, with bourgeois means to prepare its own revolution!

But what is the relation between a proletarian advance and the concession of such right or such liberty by the bourgeoisie ?

Let us take an example : the situation in Argentina in 1973. For years, glorious workers' struggles took the prisoners out of their jails. At the same moment, the "bureaucratic" and "antibureaucratic" Peronists, the Trotsko-Morenists of the PST asked the workers to wait for the amnesty order, without knowing if it included the grave delinquency cases. The workers' struggle emptied Villa Devoto and permitted many comrades to reinstate the struggle. How should we interpret these facts ? For the classical bourgeois parties, the coming out of prisoners is always a consequence of what they legally concede, for bourgeois parties that call themselves "worker's parties", it is the opposite : the amnesty orders are the great workers' victory. Both kinds of bourgeois parties agree to characterize the juridical formalization as fundamental.

There is a difference between these two tendencies, but they are both tendencies of the same class : the bourgeoisie. They only disagree on the ways to kill the workers' movement, to integrate it democratically and to justify juridically the situation. But for all the communist revolutionaries, to the contrary, the victory is not to obtain decrees but that the prisoners could join their class brothers in the street. What about the amnesty ? It is only a juridical manoeuvre of the bourgeoisie to try to integrate in its democratic legality what is happening in the streets and that it can no more avoid. Its aim is to turn the situation to its advantage. The coming out of the prisoners is disguised in amnesty by the juridical formalization.

There is the same opposition between the right of press and the existence of an autonomous workers' press. In general cases, the liberty of press guarantees the liberty of undertaking and the financial aspect is predominant. But in certain circumstances, the liberty of press can be extended to the workers' press as long as the latter does not have much influence and that it can be controlled by the bourgeoisie in its free circulation. But in a world where everything is merchandise, where everything tends to dissolve in the world of exchange, of money, of consumption, let us not have any illusion : the workers' press will never develop on that ground. The same thing happens with the right of strike. Let us leave aside the well-known case of strikes that do not attack the profit rate of the bourgeoisie. A strike is only recognized legally when the bourgeoisie is in a weak position and has no other solution to try to break a strike than to legalize it. Both cases are bound but in any way, the legalization never brings anything new to the proletariat in its struggle. Its force is only its organized and conscious force, before and after the legalization.

Another question for those so-called "Marxists" to think about: for what other reason would the bourgeoisie give any right to its historical enemy (the proletariat) ?

If it were true that these rights and liberties would help

the revolution, why hasn't there been any revolution in the countries that have a long democratic tradition, as the U.S.A. for example? Why did it develop in Russia, which had known centuries of Tsarism and only a few months of "democracy" ? And why did it burst under the most "democratic" regime of the whole Russian history, the one of Kerensky ? On what rights and liberties could the workers in Iran rely to defend their strikes of 78/79 ? In what way did the acknowledgment of the "Solidarity" syndicat in Poland, help the workers' movement to develop and extend ? Didn't it happen precisely to recuperate the movement by taking it away from its anti-capitalist aims to deviate it on the reform of the exploitation system, with the blessing of both the Pope and Brejnev ?

Why shouldn't we ask for the right of revolution ? In fact, it is quite normal that the democratic right or left bourgeoisie would try to impose its own "human rights" and would make no distinction between amnesty and the liberation of prisoners, the right of strike and the strike, the right of press and the existence of a workers' press. The heart of all this mystification is to consider the juridical formalization as a workers' victory while it is nothing but a weapon of the bourgeoisie.

Two ways of interpreting History

To defend its interests, the bourgeoisie needs to interpret history in its own way. It always tells us that we do not know history, that the working class has always struggled to obtain the right of vote, of strike... All the so-called worker parties reduce the history of proletarian struggles to a question of conquests of democratic rights in the aim of justifying their past, present and future actions.

These servants of the capital refuse to see the class antagonisms and the specific interests of the working class. They use the slogans of the masses which are still submitted to the dominant ideology to prove that the workers have always fought for pure democracy and in this way, they kill a second time the millions of workers "democratically" slaughtered throughout the history of struggles. In doing so, they try to justify their functions of deputies in the bourgeois state apparatus. But one must replace the facts on their real basis (i.e. the immediate and historical interests of the proletariat, which are strictly opposite to the ones of the bourgeoisie), all these struggles aim at destroying the class society, whatever the momentary consciousness of the workers who live these struggles could be. "It does not matter much what a worker, or even the whole proletariat, can imagine what he is aiming at. What matters is what he is really and historically obliged to do".

We do not care about the flags that can float over the struggles, we care only about the enormous efforts of the proletariat to organize itself and fight the bourgeoisie. Therefore it is very logical that while the so-called "Marxists" consider that the universal suffrage is a conquest of the proletariat, we consider that any reform of the state is a way to perfect the domination methods of the bourgeoisie. The only true conquests of the working class are its struggle experience and its growing autonomy and power of organization. What remains of its struggles is the political conclusions that worker minorities can draw from their history. It is only through this "workers' memory" carried by minorities that the movement can avoid making always the same mistakes.

On the other hand, the interpretation of history based on the "democratic conquests" of the workers have led the defenders of this

vision to the parliament and the ministeries. This is not surprising. One must not forget that the capitalist class is the first dominant class of history for which the blood privileges are not determinant. Any citizen, even a "worker", can reach the bourgeoisie if he has good capacities to defend the bourgeoisie point of view : this is called social promotion. In this way, democracy can chose the best elements of a worker's origin to control more efficiently the workers' movement. Let us remember the example of the "worker" Noske, who became the leader of the massacre of the Berlin insurrection of 1919, and who killed R. Luxembourg and K. Liebknecht, Leo Jogiches and thousand of revolutionary workers.

This system not only allowed some "workers" to reach a position of oppressors to their ex-class brothers, but also entire "worker parties" to be chosen by the capital to reinforce its domination (for example : the parties of the 2nd International). So it is not surprising that these parties interpret history as a succession of steps leading to democracy.

As a conclusion, we should say that the two ways of interpreting history correspond to the interests of the two antagonistic classes of our society : either the struggle of the proletariat for the communist revolution, or the bourgeois defence of the democratic dictatorship of the capital.

What do the so-called Marxists want ?

Let us now leave the questions of parliaments, ministeries, governments, syndicates, directors... and let us examin the following question : what "working class" does the left wing of the capital wish to see, what would be the result of its politics, what social situation is it aiming at ?

To accept their orders means striking for the defence of syndical rights, associating in the name of the liberty of reunion (with them and under their direction), talking in the name of the right of expression, electing the "worker" deputies in the name of democracy; and why wouldn't we also go to jail in the name of the right of amnesty and of the right of the prisoners, why wouldn't we risk our lives in the sacred name of citizenship ?

We are not exaggerating : how many workers, who believed them, have ended prisoners or killed for having written on a wall the order of his own submission : "long live democracy, death to dictatorship ." ?

The aim is evidently to take the proletariat away from its class field and to try to deviate towards the defence of democracy, all what the working class tries to do : strikes, reunions, press, discussions and its own dictatorship for the abolition of salaried work.

If the bourgeoisie reaches this aim, it can control in all details its domination system, and that is what has happened historically. When a fraction of the bourgeoisie is "worn out" by the use of power, it wishes to take a rest and leave the "opposite" fraction continue its work. The right wing would take care of the killing and imprisonment of the proletarians while the left wing would direct all the workers' claims towards human rights and democratic liberties. We could even imagine that a time would come when the workers would not even think of striking for their "shabby interests", when no mad group would have the evil thought of fighting against democracy or of making a revolution.

We are publishing this manifesto against war between Iran and Irak (a) written by a group of communist comrades from this area. This manifesto entirely materializes the emergence of workers' groups directly on the entirety of communist positions, against and in the bosom of capitalist war, being an expression of the important defeatist movements which are taking place in this area. In opposition to all "third-world"-myths, to all myths of "national liberation", of double revolution,... and also against myths denying the evident existence of communist forces acting against capitalism everywhere in the world, this manifesto materializes in the highest degree the necessary world-wide centralisation of communist forces. We appeal to all really proletarian forces to discuss this basic document, to translate and reprint it, as well as to continue our indispensable efforts to crystallize a real militant working community between internationalist groups (b).

- (a) In one year, this war has caused a 20 milliard dollars worth of destructions in Irak, and 50 milliard dollars in Iran. The cooperative committee of Gulf States is paying 13 milliard dollars a year to finance Irak. Moreover, proletarians from Marocco, Egypt, Jordania, Afghanistan, Thailand, Palestine... are being enrolled for either side. Destructions of human lives, as well as of materials affect obviously more proletarians of those countries than those of the two countries directly involved. In one year 50 000 have been killed in Irak, and 75 000 were killed in Iran. In January 1982 the monstrous number of 270 000 killed on both sides was reached.
- (b) To contact our comrades having written this document, write to our postbox (without mentioning the name of the group) :
B.P.54 - Bruxelles 31 - 1060 Bruxelles - Belgique.

Internationalist Communist Group.

WAR AND PEACE AGAINST THE PROLETARIAT.

War is a historical product of all class-societies, which points out exploitation as being their common character. The historical motive behind capitalist war is the existence of crises, linked with the antagonism between the social character of production and the private character of appropriation. Impossible to do away with those crises without abolishing those contradictions. By making war, the capitalist "solution" of crises - war by capital against human labour - capital materializes on a world scale its very essence by attacking and destroying social labour - living labour and fixed labour - as well as the communist movement.

Therefore, in opposition to all capitalist parties (including "Marxist-Leninists") we support that war, wherever it may be, means war by worldwide capitalism against the proletariat (1). On the opposite side of our position, stands the justification of the system of wage-slavery, which tries to camouflage the worldwide contradiction between capital and labour as being nothing else but an opposition between the weak and the strong, between progressives and reactionaries, between nationalists and imperialists....

The Iran/Irak war does not escape from the worldwide domination by the capitalist system, and just like all other wars, past and present, it is a war by capital in order to "resolve" its crises and its chronic anarchy, i.e. to maintain the system of wage-slavery.

During those 22 months of warfare, hundreds of factories and societies have been destroyed, thousands of workers have been massacred and executed.(2) On top of that, the rise of commodity prices, of taxes, the increase in overtime-working, the drop of purchasing power have been organised for the sake of the mother-countries' interests, for the Arab nation, for the sake of Islam, against the "aggression" by other imperialisms...All this in order to mystify workers and to submit them to capitalist domination.

By this action, all imperialist parties and tendencies (including "Marxit-Leninists") have accomplished their function of flagging, by their analysis, "the Irakian aggression against the anti-imperialist republic of Iran". This analysis is nothing else but whimpering about "the destruction of national economy" i.e. the economy of capital. They only wail about the "weakening of unity, because of war, between anti-imperialist nations" i.e. the unity of capital. For "Marxit-Leninists", the causes which launched the war are "lack of democracy", of "political freedom", the lack of "popular-national power" and also the lack of a "workers' and peasants' state"...and therefore only the realisation of these objectives, these "national-democratic" objectives, could possibly prevent war (3).

(1) cf.war between Israel, PLO, Lebanon...the Falklands war, the war of Vietnam, Tchad, Somalia...

(2) war started on September 22nd, 1980

(3) "People of Irak, revolt, bring down the Baas-power (i.e. national-socialist-pan-arabian), in order to restore democracy" (quoting the "communist" party of Irak). This position, in defence of Iran, means nothing else but the defence of wage-slavery. From this bourgeois point of view, it is asking to stop war and to make peace while linking those claims to the fall of the Baas-party in power. The positions of the Toudeh-party (= people = CP of Iran) are exactly the same, i.e. the defence of their gods, the nation, the capital.

We state, in opposition to capitalist logic and practice, that the proletariat cannot realize its class-substance but by its historical practice, by its revolutionary opposition to war. The workers' manifestations and strikes that are going on for five months in cities in Iran as well as in Irak, demonstrate the validity of this position (4). Workers of a cigarette factory in Suliamania have organised a 3-day strike against wage-cuts imposed in order to pay war-expenditures. Their slogan was "neither Saddam, neither Khomeiny". This position means a historical refusal of the nation, and of its defence. Because of their revolutionary defeatist position, thousands of proletarians have been executed in Iran and Irak (5) as ennemis of the nation, as atheists, i.e. antiislamics, as traitors... Those historical events demonstrate the necessity for communists to organise themselves.

Because of the positions and the struggle of the proletarian movement, capitalism is trying to stop those movements, at one and the same time by trying to make peace, its peace, peace of capital, and by focusing the resumption of war against the strongholds of the workers' struggles. That is why today's resumption of the Iranian offensive has been focused on Bassorah, a high place of workers' struggle in Irak. Looking back on history, one can deduce this historical fact that, in all wars, capital tries to stop war in order to impede workers' defeatist struggles, while at the same time, resumption of hostilities means nothing else but the continuation of anti-workers' action. The attempt to stop the Iran/Irak war has become evident since Irak has started withdrawing its troops from Iranian territory, and this is because of workers' demonstrations and revolts. To justify the Iranian offensive which followed the withdrawal of Irakian troops, capital is using the defence of national interest against the communist movement which continues today in Irak as well as in Iran. Capital always tries to attack and to check class-movements, and that is why it links the ceasing of war, as well as its resumption, to the "victory of the Arab nation and the interest of the Islamic revolution" (quoting Saddam Hussein). That is how capital maintains the continuity of its anti-communist actions (6).

In a leaflet against war, written in March 1981, by a group of internationalist comrades in Irak, it is stated : "The bourgeois of both countries, Iran and Irak, in order to defend their class-interests, have made another move towards war, and this in the name of humanity, of the Arab nation, of self-determination, to defend the "holy Muslim religion", and the Muslims driven out of Irak (...) They trample on their "human rights". And the bourgeois in Iran as well as in Irak, have well premeditated that war would destroy their factories, and their industrial centres, diminishing trade-activities,... knowing that, for them too, war would have

(4) For the last five months, workers have organised many demonstrations and strikes against war, in defence of their class-interests, in the cities of Bagdad, Bassorah, Mossoul, Suliamania...This revolutionary position of the proletariat has been severely repressed by the capitalist authorities (use of helicopters, executions, massacres).

(5) In Irak only, 3000 proletarians have been executed, in one year, without including thousands of casualties on the front.

(6) Against the revolutionary action by the proletariat, the unions, as brave soldiers defending the nation's interests, have sent greeting telegrams from all important cities, and have renewed their fidelity to Saddam Hussein.

catastrophic results. But if they make war for all that, essentially it is to defend their property. One should not neglect the fact that, apart from those material damages, world-wide bourgeoisie profits enormously from this war and its consequences. From day to day the proletariat's situation is getting worse because of rising prices, underconsumption, etc... On top of that, the blood being shed by war, is the proletariat's blood (7).

That is how capital, in order to stop its war, makes its peace. Peace is capitalism's arm, it uses peace in its practice to maintain a favourable situation to continue capital's movement, i.e. maintain wage-slavery, check and recuperate proletarian action and transform revolutionary defeatism into pacifism. From this point of view, peace is linked with the wage-system, as much as war.

The proletariat's point of view is opposed to capitalist peace and war : it is the communist revolution for the destruction of the world-wide capitalist system.

July 1982.

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- (7) "The capital, a quarterly reviewer says, keeps away from quarrels and uproar and is timid by nature. That is very true, however it is not all the truth. The capital hates the absence of profit or a minimum profit, as nature hates vacuum. Let the profit be good enough, the capital becomes courageous : 10 % sure and it is used everywhere, 20 % it gets hot, 50 % it is of great temerity, 100 % it tramples under foot all the human laws, 300 % there is not one crime it would not care to commit even at the risk of the potence.
When disorder and discord give profit, it will encourage both of them; as a proof of that : smuggling and slave-trade."

(Trade unions and Strikes - note 17, chapter XXXI - THE CAPITAL, Marx).

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"This sphere that we are deserting, within whose boundaries the sale and purchase of labour-power goes on, is in fact a very Eden of the innate rights of man. There alone rule Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham. Freedom, because both buyer and seller of a commodity, say of labour-power, are constrained only by their own free will. The contract as free agents, and the agreement they come to, is but the form in which they give legal expression to their common will. Equality, because each enters into relation with the other, as with a simple owner of commodities, and they exchange equivalent for equivalent. Property, because each disposes only of what is his own. And Bentham, because each looks only to himself. The only force that brings them together and puts them in relation with each other, is the selfishness, the gain and the private interests of each. Each looks to himself only, and no one troubles himself about the rest, and just because they do so, do they all, in accordance with the pre-established harmony of things or under the auspices of an all-shrewd providence, work together to their mutual advantage, for the common weal and in the interest of all."

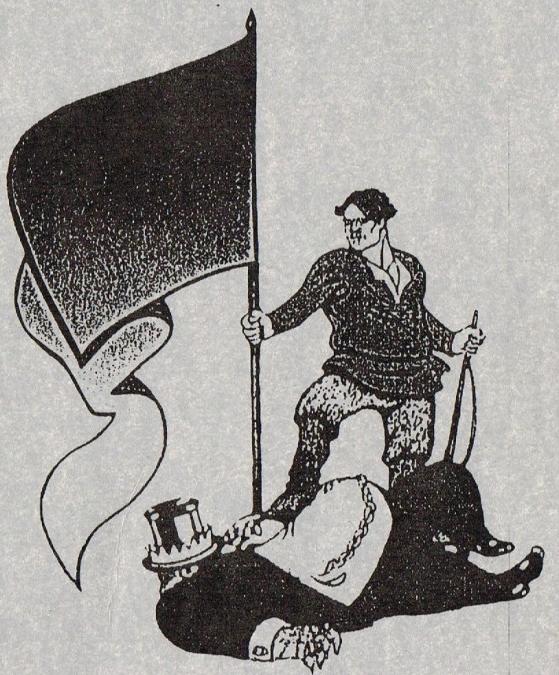
Marx - The Capital

T/SDR/4/1/136
DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT FOR

COMMUNISM

In the East, in the West, in the North, in the South,...

THE PROLETARIAT CLAIMS
ONLY ONE WAR :



CIVIL WAR
AGAINST THE BOURGEOISIE !

THE ABOLITION OF WAGE LABOUR !

APRIL 1992

N° 7

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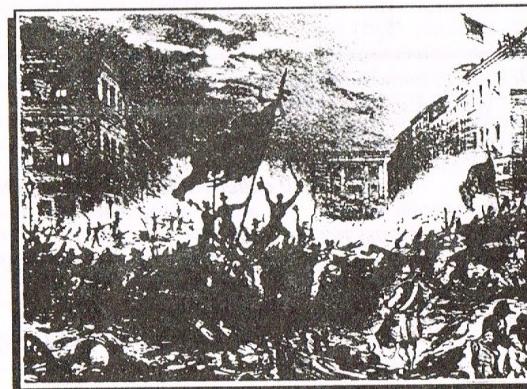
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Central review in english of the internationalist communist group

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TO OUR READERS

COMRADES,

A review like this can only fully succeed in its task of organizing communist action if it has active participation of its readers and sympathisers.

Any contribution you make - theoretical, critical or practical - will help us to forge a real revolutionary tool.

Use this material! It is no one's private property - it is part of the heritage of the accumulated experience of our class. The class that is fighting to destroy wage-labour and so all classes, all exploitation. Use these texts, discuss them, reproduce them,...

If our positions interest you - if you want to discuss them or to work with us - contact the INTERNATIONALIST COMMUNIST GROUP by writing to the following address (without mentioning the group's name on the envelope):

B.P. 54
1060 Bruxelles
BELGIUM



If you want to know more about our programmatic positions, you can subscribe to any of our publications:

COMMUNISME - Central organ of the ICG in French.
(10 dollars, 400 Fb, 70 Ff, 1000 Ptas for 5 issues)

COMUNISMO - Central organ of the ICG in Spanish.
(20 dollars, 800 Fb, 140 Ff, 2000 Ptas for 10 issues)

COMMUNISM - Central organ of the ICG in English.
(2 dollars, 80 Fb, 14 Ff, 200 Ptas for 1 issue)

*Subscriptions should be sent to CCP 000-1292807-88
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INTRODUCTION

Our reviews

We publish our central reviews (in French, Spanish, Arabic, etc.) as part of our efforts aiming at centralizing militant activities and proletarian struggles at an international level. Our reviews are not simply brochures giving information or publications of propaganda and we do not want to "convince" individuals for whom the necessity of the struggle against the order of capitalist exploitation and bourgeois state oppression is exclusively a "theoretical question". We are proletarians who are exploited and oppressed like any other proletarians, who are forced, by the totality of our situation, to fight, to organize ourselves against the bourgeois order.

Our reviews are means, products and parts of this fight and are for proletarians who, starting out from our common situation of being exploited and oppressed, starting out from the class hatred against the exploiters and oppressors and from the class solidarity for our brothers, are trying to find the way of common fight.

Another important feature of our central reviews is the fact that - due to their general level of globalisation and abstraction - they become an explicit reference in the history of our class, i.e. just like communist militants today use the material that was passed on to them by previous generations of militants, in the same way today's material that we elaborate will also be an element of clarification and reinforcement for communists tomorrow. In this sense, the existence of our

central reviews does not depend on the present situation of the proletariat.

But it is easy to understand that as far as our real possibilities and the concrete means to publish such reviews are concerned, we depend entirely on the present (and past) situation of our class. As a matter of fact, it is clear that it would be irresponsible to decide to publish a review in this or that language (arguing about the historical necessity of it) without considering the real (immediate and potential) possibilities one has for turning such a publication into a REGULAR means for the centralization of communist activity.

Why the English language review is a special case?

For the reviews in French and Spanish, and in a nearly uninterrupted manner since the creation of our group (1978) practically all the concrete possibilities have been existing to publish them: continuous militant activity of the group using these languages; a relatively large number of militants and contacts involved in these activities and real possibilities to distribute them. For the English language review, at least some of these aspects are non-existent, or questionable (1).

During the past two years we had to realize that the situation - with regard to these criteria - has become much less favourable, much more difficult for us ... and of course, such a recognition of the real state of affairs, of the real state of our situation, our forces,

(1) This, of course, does not mean that as far as the French and Spanish reviews are concerned, we do not encounter such difficulties. But it is true that for reasons related to the "personal" history of the militants of different origins who are responsible for these publications, that the difficulties we are mentioning regarding the "Communism" review have less effect on the group's capacities to assure regular publications in these two languages. To have a better understanding of how we organise the political centralisation, the homogenisation of the contents of our publications in different languages, we refer to the editorial we published in "Communism" N° 5.

should be linked up with the general state of isolation and weaknesses that we live in and that our movement is going through (has been going through for the last decade ... and more!). We had to check very carefully and very precisely what necessities we are facing and what possibilities we do have.

For sure, wherever we have travelled, wherever we have met other comrades whose language we did not speak and who did not understand French or Spanish, we nearly always managed to communicate in English. Comrades in other countries, such as Germany, Norway, India, Taiwan, ... nearly always relied on English to get in touch and communicate with us. This undoubtedly is due to the fact that English today is the privileged language, the first international language for the communication of capitalist transactions (in finance, commerce, science, ...) and that consequently in most countries the imposition of English as a second language is considered by the local States to be a worthwhile investment.

So the necessity of an English language review, as a means for ourselves to contact militants in many different areas of the world, as a means and agent for the centralization of international struggle, has clearly imposed itself on us as an absolute necessity.

Compared to this necessity, our possibilities to assume such a publication, on this particular (high) level of abstraction, are really weak. They are weak in regard to the requirements for such a review (its quality) as well as in regard to the very limited means

that we really dispose of: inside our group there are no comrades for whom English is the mother tongue, and outside the group, there are only few sympathizers that we can count on to help us with the translations.

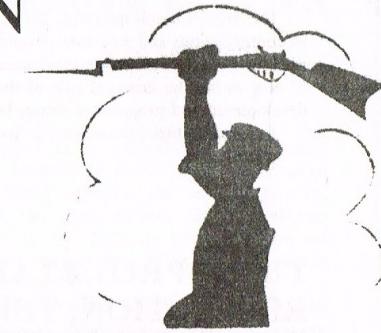
Finally, we agreed that in spite of these difficulties, we really need the English language review, as it is a means of opening some (though limited) new perspectives, too. The group should act, also concerning these questions, in historical perspective, and judge the importance of its actions on the basis of this historical approach. The aspect of concrete English language activity is weaker (but not non-existent), but the potential perspective is much more important.

We need the review in English to maintain and improve our contacts with fighting proletarians and to have chance to make new contacts by the means of circulating our review, wherever it is possible. We cannot just wait for a greater demand for a review in English, we should contribute to the development of a real demand for it. We want the review in English to be a possible means of breaking out of the general state of isolation and weaknesses that we live in and that our movement is going through.

We are expecting all our comrades ("readers") to contribute to the task of reading, criticising, and spreading this review, as well as to the task of translating, writing, etc.. We need the comrades' contributions and we consider it our task, among others, to organize these contributions. We are aware that this will be one of the main conditions for our activities with the means of this language to become more real.



WAR OR REVOLUTION



THE CAPITALIST NECESSITY FOR WAR

Capitalism cannot live without war. It is not by chance that war permanently exists in this or that part of the world, it is not by chance that it is generalizing. The reason is: this society cannot live without war.

War is nothing else but an inevitable expression of private property of the means of production, freedom of trade and competition.

Moreover, looking through the historical development of Capital and the consequent exacerbation of all the contradictions, we can see that this system only grew up thanks to successive wars and that the cycle it needs to survive is: crisis, war, reconstruction, expansion, new crisis,... and so on. Concretely, capitalist progress and development are made possible through barbarity and war.

Briefly explained, the reason for this is that the mass of capital grows more quickly than its possibilities of valorization. Thus comes a time of overproduction of capital, which leads to the situation that part of the worldwide social capital is excluded from the valorization process, by and on the benefit of another part of the same worldwide social capital; the conditions for a new valorization process will only be regenerated from and on the basis of a violent devalorization of a part of capital; or, to put it in a better way, on the basis of the fact that part of capital stops working as such (bankruptcy or physical destruction of the means of production).

Closing down factories or putting part of constant capital on the rubbish heap, as it happens daily through the "normal" application of the law of value, are never enough. That's the reason why regularly a generaliza-

depression takes place and leads to a generalized devalorization of all existing capital, capital that does not meet any possibility of profitability and must "normally" lead to generalized bankruptcy of the less profitable capitalists. This is a question of life or death for the latter (as well as all the others) to resist this inexorable law of Capital. That's how, for example, the profitability of a sector can be altered on the basis of protectionism,... which only leads to pass its own sentence on other capitalists. The organization of capitalists, on different levels of centralization, aiming at leading and aiming to lead this war with the best possible conditions (societies, cartels, national States, imperialist blocs,...) periodically gives birth to war: this war is a partial solution to the problems of worldwide capitalism. Beyond the fact that wars develop as interimperialist struggles to seize means of production and markets; beyond the fact that in the consciousness of part of the bourgeois this war looks like a war against other bourgeois (which it is as well); war, as a matter of fact, through the destruction of an important part of world capital, improves the general conditions of valorization of the whole of the international social capital.

This is the reason why it is a reactionary utopia to want to stop war while keeping this society that generates war. To stop the run for war, it will be necessary to give up the economic capitalist development; to stop the barbarity that capitalist progress means, it will be necessary to stop the development of bourgeois economy, that of national production, etc. Capitalism is reproduction, growth, development,...this is the reason why only the destruction of capitalism will suppress wars.

The more Capital develops, the more the whole of its contradictions and atrocities develop; more progress and growth means more depressions, crises, necessities of new wars. The criminal role of those apologists of development and progressive clerics becomes clear.

As to peace that follows war, far from being the real

negation of war, it only exists as part and product of the latter, as momentary and unstable formalization of a given correlation of terrorist forces, a correlation that other terrorist forces will inevitably consider as unfair and imposed by violence, and thus a pretext for a future war.

THE PROLETARIAT AND THE COMMUNIST REVOLUTION: THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE

The only and unique total and radical negation of war is the total and radical negation of the worldwide bourgeois society. This negation is the international communist revolution.

While the bourgeois solution to the crisis of society can only be a partial solution, the communist revolution is the general solution par excellence. While only war - with peace, reconstruction and, in the best case, the expansion they mean- can boost a new infernal cycle towards a new depression and a new war, social revolution appears as the unique alternative able to break once and for all from the permanent barbarity of war.

But, as bourgeoisie only is the class that represents Capital and embodies its historical agent, proletariat is the historical agent of the revolutionary negation of Capital, the historical class of the social revolution.

Bourgeoisie is the one that enforces all determinations of Capital and cannot escape from any of them. The struggle for the maximum profit, the competition, the commercial war and war as such are as essential to this class as breathing is to human beings.

On the other hand, whatever illusions proletarians may have about improving their lot in this society, or about war, proletariat as a class is historically forced by its own social situation to deny the whole of capitalist society, to impose through revolutionary violence the destruction of the society based on the dictatorship of profit, competition and war; it is historically forced to make the worldwide revolution.

Communist revolution is not an alternative among alternatives, it is the unique alternative to this society of misery and permanent war. In this sense the

contradiction: war/revolution is just an expression of the contradiction: capitalism/communism, an expression of the antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat.

This is where our Party's invariant position against war and for revolution comes from. This position is expressed in our thesis 26 (Cf. Theses of programmatical orientation):

"Workers have no homeland, one cannot take away from them what doesn't belong to them. Any form of defense of the nation, under whatever pretext, is an attack against the worldwide working class. Under the reign of bourgeoisie, all wars are imperialist wars opposing two or more factions or groups of interests of world capital. Proletariat launch and claim only one war: the social war against the whole bourgeoisie. Independently of the direct intentions of the protagonists, the essential role of wars is to affirm Capital and to smash objectively and subjectively the subversive class within this society. In this sense, wars are never merely wars between National States, between the forces of "national liberation" and the "imperialist" forces, or wars between "imperialists"; they are essentially wars of Capital against communism."

Opposed to all interbourgeois antagonisms between "progressive" and "reactionary" factions, "fascist" and "anti-fascist" factions, "left wing" and "right wing" factions,... the logical consequences of which are imperialist wars, the proletariat has no other solution but the intransigent struggle against all sacrifices (against all truce, all national solidarity): revolutionary defeatism, turning its weapons against its "own" direct exploiters, against its "own" direct oppressors. The proletariat's aim is to transform (for the international centralization of this community of struggle against Capital) capitalist war into a revolutionary war of the world proletariat against the world bourgeoisie."

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ANTAGONISM BETWEEN WAR AND REVOLUTION

The more Capital developed, the more it developed its barbarity, its historical antagonism against humanity, and, by this, the historical agent of this antagonism: the proletariat. The more national economy progressed, the more it transformed itself into an economy of war; the bigger the growth of the notorious Gross National Product is, the stronger the military production is, not to mention that all big progresses are made within the military sector. All this meant even more sacrifices for the human beings (but isn't it precisely this humanity we are asked to sacrifice on behalf of the economy and the nation?!?), even more negation of the human necessities of the proletariat.

War in itself, the open declaration of the hostilities, contrarily to what pacifists say, is by no means a change of nature of bourgeois society; it is by no means a break from its progress; it is only the most natural result of economic development, of competition, of social and interbourgeois peace.

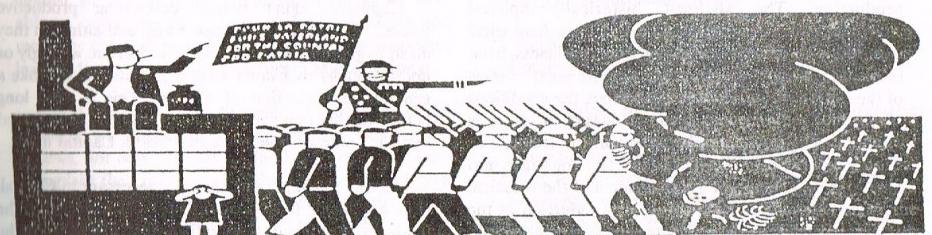
On the other hand, from the point of view of humanity, war means a qualitative step in the antagonism between Capital and the human being, between bourgeoisie and proletariat, between war and revolution. To schematize, let's say that the reasons are:

- because war means the destruction of the means of life and of life itself, which is just another exacerbation of the general antagonism between the capitalist rapport of production (that overwhelm and humanity) and the productive forces of humanity.
- because war means that the realization of bourgeois interests means denying the proletariat as a class; the affirmation of economic nationalism and imperialism means the slaughter of the proletariat.
- because war supposes a general level of general exacerbation of relative and absolute misery of the

proletariat as well as an exacerbation of all social contradictions; because the more Capital needs social peace and national adhesion, the more it requires national unity, the more obvious the contradiction becomes between the interests of the nation, of capitalism and its war and those of the proletarians sent to the slaughterhouse.

- because war is always the war of destruction of the proletariat, because those sent to kill and die are proletarians, because in the affirmation of people in war, the subject of the communist revolution itself is destroyed.- because of all these reasons, the proletariat is more than ever forced to fight, to take over and to recognize its historical antagonism with bourgeois society, because in a period of open war, the smallest defence of interests of the proletariat (although it's about its bread, its life, the life of its sons and comrades) is considered to be an attack against the national state (which, in fact, it is), a betrayal of the fatherland (*idem*)... and because the struggle against its immediate enemy, "its" recruiting officers, "its" bourgeoisie, "its" state has only one alternative: the revolution and directly is on the terrain of the universal struggle of the proletariat against war and for revolution.

This is confirmed and concretized all throughout history. The highest moments of the universal revolutionary struggle have always been linked to the struggle against imperialism, since the proletarian movement in Paris during the Commune up to the international revolutionary wave of struggle of 1917-1919, not to mention the war and revolution in Spain in 1936-1937. This can be seen also in the fact that when counterrevolution is total and national, war can carry on its work of general destruction, as it did during the Second World War, for instance.



INTERIMPERIALIST WAR, WAR AGAINST THE PROLETARIAT

Imperialist war is often opposed to war against the proletariat. Even revolutionary militants are frequently involved in controversy to determine if the function of war is the struggle between bourgeois, between national States or against communism.

As we said it before, we consider this a false polemic, a false opposition. In reality, every national war in the capitalist system is at the same time an imperialist war and a war to destroy the proletariat. This needs some more explanation.

The point is not that each faction of the bourgeoisie, when going to war seeks to destroy the proletariat or to provoke a general devalorization of capital to improve the general condition of valorization. These factions generally go to war to destroy the enemy they are in competition with, to take over their competitors' means of production and/or markets, to prevent the devalorization of their own products by taking over part or the whole of their enemy's means of production. But, while considering all this as objective facts and beyond the consciousness of those who enter into the war, it is important to see that they realize the imminent tendency of capitalist production to destroy the productive forces of Capital (means of production and labour force), provoking this way the devalorization of capital that will later make reconstruction and valorization of the rest of world capital, easier, destroying at the same time the real subject of communism.

To put it more clearly, let's consider the basis of capitalist society. Capitalist society cannot exist through simple reproduction, as we have already said it; it cannot exist without the development of the productive forces, without the constant revolution of the mode of production. The slightest historically-empirical observation enables us to understand that technological progress is part of the life of Capital. Nevertheless, from the point of view of the whole, from the point of view of the social capital, it does not improve the conditions of profitability; on the contrary, inasmuch as it is concretized by (or as it takes shape in) an increase of the organisational composition of Capital (we don't take into account here the case of a development of the technical composition of Capital thwarted by a reduction of the composition in term of value), technical progress would tend to a reduction of the world rate of profit if there

where no conditions thwarting this law (such as the increase of the rate of exploitation). The question will then be: why do capitalists impulse technical progress if it tends to reduce the average rate of profit and to devalorize the existing capital (an increase of the productivity of labour does not only reduce the value of what's going to be produced, but also the value of what has already been produced, according to the fact that the value is not the time of labour required to produce something, but the time of labour required to produce it again, to reproduce it)?

The answer is: the essence of Capital is competition, anarchy and opposition of capitals; Capital only is a whole of opposed and struggling capitals; it is not "Capital in general" that economically decides, but each capitalist, each specific faction of capital; of course, all of them are interested in technical progress since on the basis of that they can make "extraordinary surplus value". Indeed, each individual capitalist or (which, at a certain level, is the same) each faction of Capital increasing the productive force of labour it exploits, obtains a time of labour of the produced commodities lower than the time of labour of the mass of the same article produced within the average world social conditions. That is to say, what is wrongly called "the individual value" is then higher than its social value. Of course, the real value of a commodity is not its individual value but its social value (which is not measured by the time of labour needed in each case, but by the time of labour socially required for its production), thus, the faction of Capital that uses the more performant technique obtains the same products, and therefore the same value as its competitors with less work: that's where the extraordinary surplus value comes from.

Capitalists don't bother developing productive forces,... they have to! The same way, and although they do so to get a higher particular valorization, willingly or not, (in reality they don't want it!) capitalists provoke a general devalorization of Capital. This is why long before we did, other revolutionary militants understood that the contradiction of Capital lies in Capital itself.

Among the general tendencies necessary to Capital, it is important to distinguish, on the one hand, the tendency to war of devalorization and destruction of the historical enemy, and on the other hand, the forms it

takes, that is to say, that the form in which the coercive law of competition imposes itself appears like a motivation in the consciousness of the different factions of Capital (trusts, cartels, coalition, National States,...).

That is the reason why, while the whole of bourgeois society is busy with interbourgeois problems - interimperialist problems-, while before and during wars the media inform about the relation of forces between the two opposed camps or talk about governmental and diplomatic chitchat trying to formalize this relation of forces into this or that kind of agreement or peace treaty or convention, we stress the fact that imperialist

war is a war of affirmation of capitalism, a war against proletariat, against communism.

War is as much imperialist as capitalist and against proletariat. In the face of this objective reality, both classes have their own interests and their own class point of view. The bourgeoisie (and the public opinion it makes) is on the belligerent and imperialist terrain (terrain from which come the discourse of the Pope and the other pacifists, and more generally, the diplomatic agreements); the proletariat, and mainly the most decided and organized elements of this class, i.e. the communists, are openly on the terrain of the revolutionary struggle against war.

OUR MATERIAL AGAINST WAR

All along the historical struggle against war, the proletarian vanguard never ceased clarifying all the aspects we have schematized here in a general and abstract form. Since the Manifesto of the Communist Party claiming that the proletariat has no country or the Roig de San Martin's order at the end of last century claiming that "to be a patriot is to be an assassin", through the explicit claim of revolutionary defeatism in the "first" and "second" world wars and all the work done later by the communist factions for the programmatical reappropriation, revolutionary theory of the proletariat affirmed itself each time more in that sense.

The International Communist Group, as part of the large work done by our historical Party since its origins up until now, has always centred its efforts on revolutionary defeatism and has impulsed in this framework theoretical clarification; we have published historical material of our class, we have taken position against all wars of Capital and, in so far as we were able to, our group participated in different actions and meetings trying to organize the revolutionary minorities leading the proletariat in its struggle against Capital.

Once again we claim the general coherence of the material we published in this sense in our central reviews, not only because we think they can contribute to explain the Gulf war and what they call now (April 1991) peace in that area, but also because they still are essential for the understanding of the future.

Beside the Theses of Programmatical Orientation of

our group that are an attempt to put forward the evidence of the relationship between the contradiction capital-communism and imperialist war-social revolution, material we have published (without being exhaustive) can be divided into three groups. They are as follows:

- 1) fundamental works about capitalism and wars;
- 2) revolutionary defeatism and organization of the community of struggle against Capital and war;
- 3) analyses of military forces and positions against war and for the revolution.

1) Fundamental works about capitalism and wars

- Against the myth underlying national liberation (in French and Spanish only);
- Worker memory: causes of the imperialist wars; position of the Hennaut's tendency, position of Jehan's tendency and our position (idem);
- Capital, totality and imperialist war (idem);
- They talk about peace (idem).

2) Revolutionary defeatism and organization of the community of struggle against Capital and war

- Contribution to the gathering of revolutionaries (idem);
- International proposition: to groups and militants fighting for the world revolution (in Communism n°4);
- Invariance of our international activity and some practical elements to concretize this proposition (in Communism n°4);
- About an international meeting, "some remarks about

the worldwide relation of forces between the classes" (only in French and Spanish).

3) Analyses of the military forces and positions against war and for the revolution

- A new jump in the course to war (only in French and Spanish);
- The army and the military politics of the United States (idem);
- Falklands: against imperialist war, world communist revolution;
- War and peace against the proletariat (idem);
- Iran-Iraq: class war against imperialist war (in Wildcat n°10);

- West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem,... in response to the proletarian struggle the bourgeoisie is once again preparing a massacre (in Communism n°5);
- Massacre in Hallabja (in Communism n°6);
- Against the peace and the war of this fucking world (only in French and Spanish).

Of course, this classification is arbitrary and more than a text could be in two or in all sections. On the other hand, even if we consider the whole of these texts as the fruit of our Party, of the historical Party of the proletariat, some were not written (or exclusively written) by our small group.

THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR ANALYSIS OF THE GULF WAR

The recent war in the Gulf has been an unquestionable demonstration of the validity of the analysis done by revolutionary Marxism.

Against all bourgeois discourses claiming that, at last, the epoch of eternal peace has arisen, once again capitalism has showed its truly warlike nature.

The imperialist war once again confirmed itself as war of Capital for its conservation, as war against proletariat. That is to say, it proved itself to be at the same time war for big money and destruction of productive forces, to be an international window for arms industries and to be the moment of the massacre of proletarians.

About the immense forces in the Gulf war, the analysis of the military power of the USA (and more particularly the general reorganization of the army, done in this country to take over the role of super-gendarme of the international bourgeois order even better) is important enough to call the reader to read our text "The army and the military politics of the United States". In the Gulf war it appeared as a whole what we described as the reorganization of the army and the military politics of the United States, it found in this war its tightest confirmation and application. Since we wrote the text, the only thing that has changed within the most powerful military force of the world is the growing importance of conflicts of the so-called "medium-intensity" (such as the Gulf war) in relation

with other so-called conflicts of "high-intensity" (unlikely to happen -momentarily- with the end of the Warsaw Pact, and determined by the interimperialist contradictions within the Warsaw Pact itself) and the conflicts of "low-intensity" (diminution of the relative importance of guerrilla groups); but even this variation is nothing but an application of the general flexibility that we analyzed in our texts.

While taking up this subject starting from the area of war, it might be useful to read some of the articles in which our group, against the current, insisted on the importance of the development of the contradiction between "war and revolution" in that region. While no one saw anything but a war between two countries, in these articles we put forward that in Iran and Iraq, it was a capitalist war against the proletariat. We insisted on the fact that it was a war against the revolutionary action of the proletariat in the area (especially in Iran, where the bourgeoisie played the radical card of Khomeini to stop the proletarian revolt that had managed to disarm one of the strongest armies of the world), we said that it was a war to affirm counterrevolution. All along these texts we have always presented peace as a moment of war, and for this reason, when Iran and Iraq signed a peace treaty and everyone thought the question was out, we kept on insisting and calling revolutionaries to carry on and organize the work of the community of struggle of the proletariat against war and peace in Iran and in Iraq, and we made an international meeting with this aim.

We did so as much on the basis of our global conception (peace and war as expressions of the same totality against the proletariat) as on the basis of information we had thanks to contacts (confirming that the military mobilization carried on). It is essential to read the Manifesto written by our comrades in the area in 1982 (in Le Communiste n°24) as well as "Iran-Iraq: class war against imperialist war" (in Wildcat n°10), or "Massacre in Hallabja" (in Communism n°6), because, on the basis of our comrades' information we put forward that beyond the contradiction between imperialist forces at war in Iran and Iraq and at different moments of the past, the principal contradiction between capitalist war (and peace) on the one hand and proletariat on the other hand reaches impressive levels of exacerbation.

Starting from this framework of analysis for years,

our group considers the Iran-Iraq area as a key area for the development of the contradiction between bourgeoisie and proletariat, capital and communism. In this sense, the realization of an international campaign against capitalist war, and more particularly against war and peace in Iran and in Iraq, has been the central axis of our internationalist activity (cf. "The invariance of our international activity: some practical elements to concretize this proposition" in Communism n°5 and "Massacre in Hallabja" in Communism n°6).

Although at the level of analysis there is nothing to add, seeing the development of the Gulf war, its quickness, the continuation of internal interbourgeois wars in the area, it could be interesting and useful to make a consequent description, starting from our class point of view and against all media lies.

OPEN WAR AGAINST THE PROLETARIAT

The first thing we want to underline is, opposite to all that was said, that the Gulf war was a war against us, a war against proletarians.

Once more in the history of capitalism tens and hundreds of thousands of proletarians were sent to butchery, to massacre on behalf of the peace of the homeland, of democracy, of the liberation from imperialism and/or dictatorship. Once again behind the proletarians killing each other there lay nothing else but a problem of money, a lot of money, a problem of value fighting to valorize, of capitalist war, of war of capital.

Everything was set up for the generalized best massacre. In August '90, the Iraqi State cleared up the prisons. Proletarians considered to be the most politically dangerous ones were slaughtered. It was a current practice during the war with Iran. It was interrupted when the two countries signed a truce. Then the State granted an amnesty to most of the so-called "common law" prisoners as well as to lots of ex-deserters. It offered them some money to justify it and sent all of them (most of whom were not prepared to fight) to the front.

On the battlefield in Iraq and in Kuwait these proletarians (remember that immigrant proletarians were the first to be recruited by force in the Iraqi army and sent to the front) were literally buried, obliged by

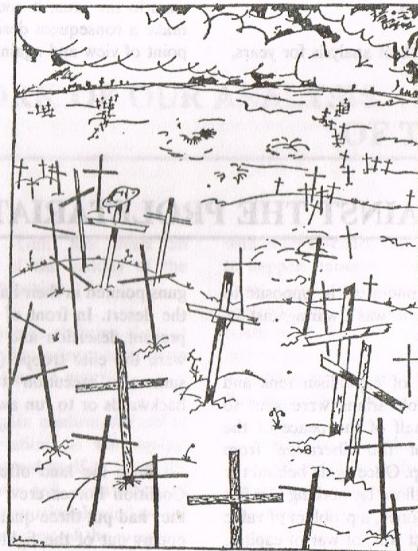
guns pointed in their back to stay in the trenches dug in the desert. In front of them there were minefields to prevent desertion and surrender, in their backs there were the elite troops (the republican guard) assuring summary execution to anyone who tried to go backwards or to run away.

Once the land offensive had been unleashed, the Coalition Forces crew over their victory and claimed they had put three quarters of the regular forces of the enemy out of the fight (although there were only ten percent of the republican guard amongst the latter). According to our point of view this clearly is the cynical confession of the fact that the massacre was concentrated on proletarians wearing uniforms. These cries of victory confirm that tens of thousands of human beings without any possibility to defend themselves were sacrificed by the Iraqi State and the Coalition Forces. For the Iraqi State still shooting at its own troops that were massively deserting the day before, this deployment of forces was essential: these tens of thousands of beings transformed into cannon fodder would hold up (even just a few days) the irremediable advance of the enemy. For the Coalition, these troops keeping still, buried and without any sophisticated weapons were a very easy target on which the whole of the killing material could be checked with very few risks for themselves.

Long before the official launching of the combats, the Iraqi civil population had been taken as hostages (the other "hostages" -the bourgeois- managed to be released) and undergone for months a situation of generalized shortage because of the total blockade (health care and food included) organized and controlled by the whole of the Coalition countries with the support of the United Nations. Here as well, the Iraqi State will take over the blockade subordinating life to the requirements of its war, imposing an even higher level of militarization on the whole of society and, doing so, ever more strongly submitting proletarians to the interests of the nation. By the way, let's notice that it's this situation of food embargo and blockade that most of the pacifists claim. As good humanists, it is to this situation they proposed to go back, once the bombing had started, in order to go right to the end with the blockade.

About bombings themselves, no one tried to hide the hundreds of thousands of tons of bombs dropped on the Iraqi and Kuwaiti territories, sowing death and destruction. On the contrary, media make all they could to convince the whole planet that it was just a "surgical operation" destroying only military targets. Starting from the same hypocrite distinction between civilian and soldier (those enrolled by force for instance are "naturally" considered as military targets), the aim of the propaganda is to make the proletariat of the rest of the world accept the development of "such a far away" massacre. We know these are our class brothers who have been oppressed to the extreme by war, who have undergone this nightmare and have fallen under tones of death material dropped on them day after day.

Given the political-military weakness of the block led by Saddam Hussein, the proletariat of the Coalition countries didn't directly suffer from the bombings or from other atrocities inherent in wars (only the troops of elite count a few deaths), but nevertheless, it endured a violent attack against the conditions of the reproduction of its life (and thus its struggle)



elsewhere as the champion of antiterrorism and, under this pretext, pursuing revolutionary militants!!!

In Turkey, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria,... war allowed direct repression to rain on the proletarian struggles. In Turkey, the end of 1990 and the beginning of 1991 were marked by a lot of very radical and hard strikes in the mining area (Zanguldak), but also in the metallurgical industry and the car industry. In Tunisia, while rejecting the gendarmes of the World State represented by the Coalition, proletarians' massive and regular demonstrations -expressing the generalized discontent- were violently repressed as being pro-Islamist

materialized as well in an increase of the exploitation rate as in the generalized increase of repression. In most cases, the increase of the exploitation rate took the shape of exceptional price rises -without wage compensation- under the pretext of the rising of oil price (due to speculative questions and not at all to shortage). It also took the shape of levying taxes to finance the national effort of war. The generalized increase of repression was especially directed at any struggle making an attempt on national unity and at any insubordination to war politics. In the United States, in Turkey, in North African countries, in Thailand, military speeches of the governments were accompanied by draconian and terrorist measures of persecution of the deserters, by the imprisonment of tens of thousands of proletarians who rejected the criminal imperialist politics of "their own" bosses, of "their own" National State. Lastly, during this short period, the State intensified the measures of police control of the whole of the population in many countries while it did everything to detect, catch and terrorize anyone who fought against "their own State", i.e. internationalist militants.

The big swindle was that at the same time the World State was organizing the most incredible concentration of deaths and terror machines in the Middle East, and presenting itself

demonstrations: another attempt to divert and channel these demonstrations, while giving credit to the Ennahda movement, always extremely loyal to the government. A similar situation existed in Algeria, where the government, to prevent another "October '88", mobilized, just as if it was also participating in the war, troops were stationed and concentrated in big cities, reservists were recalled, and young soldiers doing military service were obliged to prolong their presence and fight for the Algerian colours. On December 14th, 1990, in Morocco, the State crushes a proletarian revolt (40 deaths).

In France, England, Belgium,... bourgeoisie doesn't waste time and intensifies its racist and xenophobic politics. In England, for instance, Iraqi refugees (whose majority fled from the jails of Saddam Hussein's state terrorism) were imprisoned into detention camps (real concentration camps) and anyone coming from the Middle East was suspicious, put on files and prosecuted for being a potential terrorist. At the same time in Belgium, more than 6,000 Moroccans were threatened with expulsion.

On the other hand, with war, companies having rentability problems, saw the volume of their sales falling down and took profit of the situation to make the proletarians responsible for it. Pan American, Air France and British Airways, for instance, made thousands of redundancies.

In the United States, the generalized silence of the population towards the war politics of the government, the consensus so often commented in the press, didn't prevent this government from violently repressing a lot of demonstrations against war (although most of these demonstrations were led by pacifists) or from arresting some 15,000 persons according to Cuban media. While during the first days of the aerial war one suddenly noticed for the first time for years an alarming deficit, the State violently repressed groups diffusing leaflets against war in recruitment centres and to soldiers sent to war whether they liked it or not. In the United States, an association of soldiers' defense called "Horreo Counseling Network" denounced the fact that "many hundreds of North-American soldiers staying in Germany were forced to embark to the Gulf, bound hand and foot when necessary".

THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR ANALYSIS OF THE INTERIMPERIALIST STRUGGLE

From our point of view, imperialist antagonisms are of course less important than the immanent tendencies that push Capital to war against proletariat; that is the reason why, on these pages, the reader will find few paragraphs dedicated to the analysis of these antagonisms. It is nothing but an application of our class position that makes us take the side of the camp fighting against war; it is a materialization of our invariant line: to focus everything on what constitutes the central dynamic of this society and its negation.

Nevertheless, as we said before, protagonists don't make war because they feel like killing proletarians (although there are no doubts that in many cases they make agreements, on the basis of a military bourgeois front, to do so; especially when it is a matter of quelling a proletarian revolt), they make war to confront their competitors. To do this, and seeing the importance of the capitalist confrontations in the Gulf, we find it necessary to briefly analyze the imperialist contradictions that determined this war, without

pretending those lines could be a sufficient explanation.

We have already put forward that the development of the Gulf war (or of other wars to come), as war against the proletariat didn't surprise us, considering our framework of analysis; we shall see now that there is nothing to be surprised at as far as the development of interimperialist contradictions leading to the Gulf war is concerned.

Analysts of international politics (as well as groups claiming to be revolutionaries) were almost all totally bewildered by the changes of alliances, by the disappearance of this or that block or unity, and by the affirmation of the polarization that had led, in the Gulf, to a war between the Coalition led by yankee imperialism on one side and by Saddam Hussein and his allies on the other side.

According to our point of view on the contrary, the reconciliation of the imperialist forces, relegating other

contradictions to a position of secondary importance and making the Gulf war materialize, didn't surprise us, either.

Indeed, in capitalist society putting yesterday's alliances back into question is something permanent and particularly when the crisis is aggravating; the disruption of imperialist shares made in any kind of peace framework is implicit in the essence of Capital itself and in the kind of unity the latter realizes. As we say in the "Theses of Programmatical Orientation", the bourgeoisie is in general opposed to the proletariat, because while, in the midst of the proletariat, unity is the product of a total community of interests, bourgeois unity is always unity against others, unity of opposed interests unified against others who, in these circumstances, look like the first to confront.

Our thesis number 19 says:

"This is how the world character of capitalism gives birth to the proletariat as world class, without any regional, sector-based or national interests to defend. Opposed to the proletariat, the bourgeoisie did not only realize its revolution affirming its particular interests, but its own essence (competition) forces it permanently to violently tear one another and confront each other at all levels for the distribution and re-distribution of the means of production and commodities. Unity among the bourgeois (limited companies, agreements between monopolies, National States, constellation of states,...World State) is always realized to face commercial war and/or class war in the best possible conditions. This unity may explode at any moment and burst into different particular factions. That's the reason why the more "unified" and generalized the action of the bourgeoisie is, the more it contains the division; peace is only a stage of the war to come. For the proletariat, however, any action, even the most partial one, contains universality: one single action of our class against capital, even if it is regional or sector-based, contains the affirmation of our proper interests in every part of the world and the struggle for the universal social revolution."

The so often commented changes in the East are nothing else but the exacerbation of the crisis of Capital. Perestroika or any pseudo-alternative of the economic politics of Capital are nothing else but different names to hide the old bourgeois policies of austerity and belt-tightening proper to crisis periods (under the high universal patronage of the International Monetary Fund!!!). In the same way, the death of the Warsaw Pact and the interbourgeois struggles in some East European countries, which undoubtedly conditioned the redistribution of the imperialist forces and allowed not only the Gulf war but also the present cease-fire, are a confirmation of our analysis.

We can say exactly the same about the changes of alliances amongst the different forces of the Middle East or amongst the Occidental powers that invaded the Persian Gulf. Changes of alliances that we comment on Communisme n°32 and Comunismo n°27, where we described the sudden transformation of the big ally of the Western States, Saddam Hussein, into a machiavellian and fascist monster; while the same Western States were flirting and dancing with the terrorist regimes of Syria and Morocco on behalf of a fight "against dictatorship". That is to say that the States of England, France, the United States,... are not the only ones which, on behalf of the struggle against the violation of the international right (right that they create -considering their terrorist power- and which is nothing else but the ideological expression of this relation of force), form the Coalition and this way easily legitimate any violation on behalf of this right, but also the State of Syria maintaining its occupation in Lebanon, the Israeli State maintaining occupied territories for years in open violation of the same right, the State of Turkey assuring terrorism in Cyprus, the State of Morocco doing what it wants against all international norms in Western Sahara. All those powers form a Coalition that cannot present itself with its own legitimacy, a Coalition that can only appear as any bourgeois unity, that is to say as a circumstantial and without principles unity against an as much circumstantial enemy.

At the same time, it is beyond doubt that if today this circumstantial contradiction internationally prevails, it is because the old war contradiction (NATO-Warsaw) solidified during the other war, or, which is the same, in the other peace (Yalta agreements) was not so important any more and could be considered as something of secondary importance (or even less). Our framework of analysis, always based on the essence of Capital, always distinguishes itself from superficial analyses that could only consider war as a war between two stiff blocks, a "capitalist" one and a "socialist" one, or a "pro-Yankee" and a "pro-Russian" one (1). All those who play with these journalistic stupidities are disarmed as much in their explanations of the interimperialist wars that are taking place in the East, as in the polarization that made the Gulf war possible. Those for whom the world was effectively cut into two or three (we have always fought against these ideological prejudices in our central reviews as well as in our Thesis -see thesis n°27) are today obliged to do "political" gymnastics about the changes of nature of the Eastern countries, or about the end of the Eastern block. On top of all that there are those who could see essential differences in the social nature of Western and Eastern regimes, considering them either as "socialist" or as "state capitalist" (2).

According to us, this change of alliance, this

modification of intercapitalist blocks is by no means extraordinary, it is just the **inevitable consequence of the essential determinations of Capital** and can be seen all throughout the history of this mode of production. This is what can explain, for instance, and against all these ideologies, that the same imperialist power (although called socialist) may sell weapons to both camps of a local interimperialist war (just like Czechoslovakia did during the Biafra-Nigeria confrontation); this is the explanation for the changes of alliances in Ethiopia as well: there the imperialist penetration insured by the State of Cuba supported first "the liberation struggle of the people of Eritrea" and later, on the basis of an agreement with the State of Ethiopia (agreements determined by the advent of a pro-Moscow government)

and on behalf of "the defence of territorial integrity of Ethiopia", considered yesterday's allies as its worse enemies and sprayed them with napalm and bullets. There are thousands of examples of this kind, but to show the invariance of this feature of capitalism, let us take an example from the past century: after a while, the capital originated from Europe became autonomous and waged war against the factions that wanted to maintain the status quo. In every case, capital breaks from its national origins: the capital originated from England (and Europe, in general) and solidified as North-American capital, confronted England in a war for independence, and creole capitalists in South-America allied with England to wage an imperialist war of independence against Spain.

REASONS FOR THE LAUNCHING OF THE IMPERIALIST MILITARY ACTION

Of course, our framework of analysis given, we are not very interested in speculations about how the alliance broke, who allies with whom, which government changes imperialist camp, which imperialist block allies with which, which one takes the initiative for war,... It could only be interesting in relation with the forces of the different alliances to control and channel the proletariat, or in as much as the justification of alliances and wars, once transformed into forces by parties, unions, means of (dis)information,... are ideological

forms able to give a framework to the proletariat. It is from this point of view that in the midst of a generalized war campaign we put forward the limits these polarizations could contain:

"This is not the place to put our oar in the generalized speculation about future launching of a war. We just want to stress that the present repolarization of the world and the coming

(1) *These ideologies prevent them from being able to explain the contradictions and the imperialist wars that made in the past the Russian bourgeois State oppose the Chinese State, and the latter oppose the Vietnamese State, or this one oppose Cambodia...! And instead of understanding these contradictions as being part of the general imperialist contradictions in the struggle for the raw material, for markets, for good deals,... they give us this wishy-washy soup in which the determinants are analyzed from the point of view of the ideologies of the different bourgeois dictators (heirs of Stalin against heirs of Mao, the latter ones against Ho Shi Min's, these against Pol Pot's,...). The materialist explanation of opposed economical interests is substituted for this ideological soup, as if there had ever been in history one war that might have been explained on the basis of the ideas of its protagonists!!!*

(2) *It may seem incredible from the Marxist point of view but there has been a lot of simple-minded persons to consider these divisions stable and fixed once and for ever and to materialize this belief in the programme of their organisations. A centrist organisation like the ICC for instance, does not only consider state capitalism as a new characteristic "dominating the social life" in "the phase of decadence", of which the example of the so-called socialist countries is the best demonstration; the ICC does not only accept the bourgeois ideological division between developed and underdeveloped countries, but has also fixed these divisions in its platform for years and not only do they talk about three worlds like all the politicians, but also claim to be able to explain all the contradictions and the imperialist wars thanks to the famous question of the blocks (just like the bourgeois press does). Therefore, it is quite easy to understand why, just like the bourgeoisie and its politicians, who spend their time talking about the collapse of communism, the ICC spends its time explaining the collapse of the blocks. While, in fact, what it should try to explain is the collapse of its view of the world.*

confrontations do not seem to be mature enough for the constitution of new blocks and new mystifications to realize the supreme aim of the bourgeoisie: to lead the worldwide proletariat to war.

We do not underestimate the adhesion aroused by Saddam Hussein of important parts of the international proletariat because of their hatred for the gendarmerie States of the great powers, but it seems to us that the "Baghdad Butcher" is far too discredited in the eyes of his own troops and population (just like Kadhafi and Arafat are) to reach the supreme aims of Capital. Nevertheless, we do not exclude the development of the polarization and military conflicts in the short term, but we want to warn of the danger of an international bourgeois polarization "clearer", more "attractive" and thus more dangerous for the worldwide proletariat, if Saddam Hussein's flags are to be taken by factions of Capital less discredited in the eyes of their own population".

That is to say that, as we were claiming the need for Capital to generalize war (a need which is always more violent seeing the exacerbation of the crisis and the necessity for devaluation), we were also defining the limits of the interbourgeois polarization of the "Gulf war" from the point of view of its capacity to give a framework to the proletariat (no capacity meaning no generalization of the war). Taking into account the development of the antagonisms during the latest decade, we considered Saddam Hussein's camp very weak (the man as well as the party) and we estimated that it was impossible for him to create an international alternative to the judeo-christian imperialism, as he claimed to be able to do. All this was confirmed by the total lack of support to Saddam Hussein's regime, on the internal, as well as on the international level, and above all, by the total lack of fighting spirit of "his own troops".

The imperialist initiative of the State of Iraq to invade Kuwait was not the produce of a force but of a whole of weaknesses. This did not surprise us, given that generally these bourgeois factions have the biggest problems to accumulate, as well as to control their own population. They feel compelled to break the framework of imperialist peace by this or that kind of armed action, which unveils them as aggressor and therefore gives the advantage to their adversary in the military confrontation (since the old Clausewitz systematized it in his book "On war", everyone knows that defence is strategically superior to offence). This can be checked all throughout this century's big European wars called first and second world wars. The most disadvantaged imperialist powers in the prior peaces, the ones which were therefore less favoured by the share of the productive forces and pre-existent markets, were those that took over the initiative of the first invasions, which

led them to grant a strategic advantage that proved fatal for them.

The same applies to the Iraqi State: its situation in the interimperialist competition was a disaster and worsened by the deterioration of exchange materialized in a commercial balance-sheet getting more and more unfavourable, as well as in a huge external debt (\$70 to 90 billion in August 1990). In this sense, the breaking off the agreements on the OPEC prices by part of the States the most submitted to the imperialist politics of the Western powers, as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, was seen by the Iraqi bourgeoisie as an aggression on the whole of their accumulation cycle. Invading and annexing Kuwait (and seeing the new conditions imposed on Saudi Arabia), the Iraqi State wanted to change this situation and not only did it want to reappropriate new productive forces (raw material, fuel, and an exit to the sea), but also to increase the percentage of petrol production controlled by the Kuwaiti bourgeoisie, to improve the relation of forces in the OPEC, as well as the relation of forces (idem) of the latter in the world, and revalorize this way its first source of foreign currency. Simultaneously, the Iraqi State wanted to find new reasons to justify the permanent militarization in the eyes of the proletariat and to solidify a new opposition "against imperialism". It was looking for a national adhesion that it never achieved although it had crushed by military force the big wave of revolutionary defeatism that had swept through the country a short time before (cf. our texts about the Iran/Iraq war).

It is clear, that from the point of view of world Capital, this invasion questioned it in a way which was too generalized to be acceptable. Loosing the control of such an important part of the means of production meant that a huge percentage of petrol passed under the control of other factions, it also was a great attack against the accumulation cycle of an important part of the world bourgeoisie. Add this to the geo-political interests of the great powers of Capital (any negotiation between the opposing forces -cf. the denial of the negotiations between Saddam Hussein and the military power of the United States through their embassy in Kuwait, negotiations in which the United States committed themselves not to use their military force) and it will easily be understandable that the invasion of Kuwait by the Iraqi State was to be considered as an aggression on the other imperialist powers' interests.

From the point of view of the United States these facts formed a whole of circumstances perfect to confront the great difficulties of the Capital management of that productive area and to strengthen

its military power. In relation to this, we want to stress the following points:

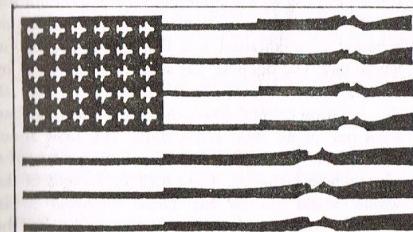
- In the face of the generalized crisis of accumulation in the productive area of the USA that could be seen for months and about which the economists were talking as "vertical fall", war appeared as the old Keynesian solution to increase public expenditure (without a high increase in the deficit in this case, given that it was financed by other forces), to increase effective demand and thus reactivate national economy (and seeing the importance of the latter, the world economy).

- Geo-politically, war was the dreamed situation to affirm the United States' role as a big international gendarme. On the one hand, they presented themselves more than ever as the ones keeping the flag of international right flying, and on the other hand they conquered in practice a strategic situation of unquestionable geo-military value.

- In the same way, the national and international militarist mobilization under the US flag against a much weaker enemy strategically strengthened the role of that State in the face of all its possible adversaries and solidified at the same time the army by providing it with new real motives to make war (against dictators, terrorists, invaders,...). This point is very important considering the general deterioration of the image of gendarme given inside as well as outside the country by the war of Vietnam and other later wars.

- It was the ideal situation to try to impose a kind of Capital order (against others) on one of the most coveted areas in the world, an area that has been a receptacle of contradictions for decades. Indeed, the consolidation and the general recognition of the State of Israel with Jerusalem as internationally recognized capital (in return for this or that kind of minor concessions so that, as the world bourgeoisie says, "the Palestinians have their State") are only possible under the general and military protection of this imperialist colossus, the State of the USA.

This short enumeration is not exhaustive and we are not interested in going into deeper details. But it is



clear that in the decision made on launching this imperialist war itself we have to take into account the more particular interests of a whole of bourgeois factions directly involved, such as those so politically proud of "restoring the American honour", such as the military "lobby" including key-men of the Pentagon and directors of big arms industries (that is to say big industries as such!), the Jewish "lobby", etc.

We are not interested either in analyzing the other international factions of Capital and their alignment

with the United States. About the more general reasons for the war let us say that it is evident that if the invasion of Kuwait had been transformed into an occupation, it would have seriously affected the cycle of international Capital because a new balance of power on the petrol price would have led to a redistribution of the surplus value internationally extracted in favour of the bourgeois controlling the raw material, probably against the ones distilling it and surely against the ones industrially depending on it. The fact that the UNO appeared much more a real agency of the USA than the usual web of intrigue where interimperialist antagonisms are diplomatically expressed, is due to this general fear that pushed all the factions to coincide about the restoring of the imperialist order prior to August 2nd. In the same way, it is clear that the old alliances that this occasion strengthened (NATO), weighed as much as the without-principles-unity against a common enemy (cf. the fact that the States of Israel and Syria can be found in the same military block, for instance).

In the medium and the long term, a petrol power as big as the USSR would have benefited from the occupation and it did not have any reason to align against Saddam Hussein. If, in the beginning, the Russian State legitimated the Coalition imperialist force, it was

1° because of the objective weakness of its own imperialist power. Given its internal contradictions, this weakness, it could not present itself as a unified force. 2° because the governing faction seems to represent each day more clearly the most dynamic interests of world Capital. Opposing to the protectionist interests of the local productive area, when necessary. Nevertheless, as this legitimization of the Coalition against Iraq could be verified as an objective transfer of imperialist rights against its traditional rival that was solidifying itself as total gendarme for the first time (tendency to change from a shared international hegemony to a near-monopoly), the violence of criticisms of the militarist factions (linked to the army leadership, the internal security and the navy) and the military-industrial establishment redoubled. Even the press echoed it. It was said that the situation in the Gulf put the security

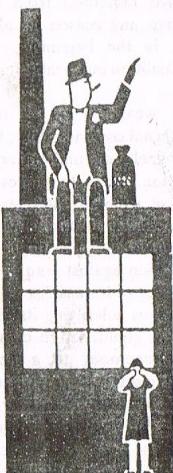
of the USSR in danger and the Soviet armed forces journal even wrote that the direction of foreign policy was "the less intelligent ever developed by a Minister of Foreign Affairs, tsarists and Soviets included". This compelled the government to try -unsuccessfully- to boost a little the image of the State as being one of the great protagonists of the imperialist decision made on

THE BIG BUSINESS OF WAR

Finally, we would like to stress - as one of the reasons for the launching of any kind of interimperialist action - the importance of the interest of big business that gets large profits out of the war, i.e. the interests of different types of bourgeois factions from different countries, who benefit from the war and from the reconstruction that will follow.

Capitalist war is not only profitable to Capital in general for the different reasons we have mentioned, it is not only profitable to the bourgeois faction that becomes victorious in the interimperialist contradiction, but it also brings about profit for a whole set of particular capitals which make important commercial deals during and after wartime.

Of course, one thinks straight away about the bourgeois factions which are directly linked to the military, such as capital that is involved in arms' manufacture.



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that is involved in arms' production and military sectors as such, all these, without exception, benefit from the increasing of the military budget; but there are also other factions that directly benefit from the war this way. For instance, all the big car factories produce also different kinds of war-vehicles (to transport troops, armoured cars, etc.). To produce these products other kinds of raw material are required, the producers of which also directly benefit from war. To stick to the example of the car industry, we can see that the producers of metal, plastic, rubber, computers, ... also get involved, as well as

sharing the world. This is the explanation for the tragicomical show played by the government of the USSR unceasingly proposing peace treaties and cease-fires. But none of these attempts could reach their goal because there was no military force decided enough to impose a cease-fire agreeing with its contradictory interests.

banking services, accountancy services, etc.. For each of these numerous sectors, tens if not hundreds of big and smaller factories will get involved in this lucrative market and will compete with each other in order to increase their parts and benefits of the war market.

And of course, the Gulf war also mobilised and militarized hundreds of thousands of men and kept them far away from their sources of supply. All this shows clearly how big the problems of logistics were. And this, of course, has attracted a lot of different sectors of capital, which also increased their turnover spectacularly, e.g. the sectors involved in tinned food, water supplies, etc.

This is why the news of the outbreak of the war was cheerfully welcomed by the different bourgeois factions. We don't know if this is true, but certain newspapers reported that in Houston, Texas, for instance, -an important center of the oil refinery- the day after August 2nd, not a single bottle of champagne could be found in the supermarkets, since the bourgeois of that town had already celebrated the war that would reactivate- so they figured -their enterprises. What we are sure about, however, is that a few months later, the stock-exchanges of the whole world welcomed the beginning of the war with euphoria! As Thomas McCarrol wrote in an article of *El País* (January 27th):

"The day after the launching of the air-raids on Iraq, the people present at the New York Stock Exchange started the day with a minute of silence to honor the North-American troops fighting in the Gulf. But this moment of meditation was the only break of the whole day. The opening was soon to be followed by a wave of outcries: BUY! BUY! BUY! When all this agitation calmed down, the Stock Exchange had lived one of its most active days! The Dow Jones climbed 114 points, the second most important rise of its whole history ... The Stock Exchanges of the whole world shared the same euphoria ... In Germany the Frankfurt Stock Exchange marked the

highest daily rise of its history and rose by 1.6% while the Japanese Nikkei in Tokyo rose by 2.4%."

No need to be an expert in bourgeois balance-sheets to understand the meaning of these historical records related to the outbreak of the war. No need either to be an economist to see that the notorious CNN, as well as the other television networks, during all these days of war and massacres of our class, showed a real "weapon fair", an incredible industrial and electronical market, which for the first time in history and on such a massive scale displayed numerous arms, machines, missiles, means of transportation, high-tech equipment, etc. All this meant billions of dollars of increase in the sales of North American industry; and this is also the reason why the economic results during the first days of the war, were extraordinary! (3) This is what Julian Martinez writes in *El País*, on January 27th, 1991:

"The results of the first days of the war could not have been more optimistic for all sectors related to the defence. In Wall Street, nearly all values related to military industry have risen. For instance, during the first few days of the war, some of them gained 37%, like General Dynamics, which produces the powerful Tomahawk missiles, the F-111 fighterplanes as well as the M1 tanks. General Dynamics's rival, Mc Donald Douglas, increased its profit by about 25%, thanks to the TV news which showed fighter planes F-15, F-18, Apache helicopter and also Tomahawk missiles. Enterprises that produce bombs, orientation equipment, and electronic systems for air navigation increased the value of their shares. It is expected that when the army and the Marines get into action, the companies producing new arms will also benefit from the boom in the Stock Exchange [one can easily notice here how each sector of Capital has its own particular interests, even in this particular kind of war -our comment]. The constructor of "the star" of the war, the famous Patriot Missile, is particularly satisfied with the enormous publicity its product received all over the world. The factories and the enterprises which produce components of this missile -Raytheon and Martin Marietta- increased the value of their shares in Wall Street."

No need to be a scholar to know that if these marvellous expectations did not come true, it is because the situation of the world economy is disastrous and because the Gulf war was not important enough to

(3) Only a short time before the launching of the land offensive, a military analyst of the Salomon Brothers Company declared: "The whole of the military industrial sector is making profits... while only a very small part of the defensive potentials that have been moved into the Gulf area have gone into action... when the exhibition on television will start, showing the tanks, all the land equipment, the Marines with their material, then the values of the producing companies will undoubtedly rise on the stock exchange market."

reverse the process of economic crisis. The level of war and destruction that Capital needs to regenerate itself and to eradicate -on this basis- its existing depression, is much bigger!

As far as the big business of the after-war period is concerned, it is worth mentioning that in the middle of the war, while they were still busy heaping up thousands of corpses and destroying not only military targets (as they pretended), but also the complete industrial infrastructure, as well as the communications and sanitary networks, the large international trusts were already competing with each other over the distribution of the tremendous contracts for the reconstruction of the war zones -just like gigantic vultures fighting over carcasses and litter! The amount of the multinational contracts that were signed for the reconstruction of the industrial infrastructure of Kuwait, was estimated at about one hundred billion dollars, and the financial arrangements for the reconstruction of Iraq were estimated to amount to more than two hundred billion dollars!

The capitalist vultures did not wait a second to share the carcasses. They did not even wait for the ex-allies to transform themselves into enemies. When finally the hour arrived to share the profitable dividends from the biggest of all capitalist trades -war and reconstruction- they all rushed, without any hesitation, onto their preys.

In "Le Monde Diplomatique" of March 1991, J.D. writes:

"More and more plans are being elaborated for the reconstruction of Kuwait and for the reinforcement of the Saudi power. At the heart of the industrial-military complex, stands the Bechtel firm, which already has important political and financial experience in the region. The same is true for Motorola, Mc Donald Douglas, General Dynamics, ATT. Forty-five billion dollars could possibly be "picked up" in Kuwait only. In Saudi Arabia, the promises are just as juicy, because Ryad says it will reinforce its airforce and buy a few hundred more tanks. Even though nobody is talking about the reconstruction of Iraq, everybody is thinking about it. Only the stubborn liberals disapprove that these contracts do not respect the Right - the right of competition. And in all these cases, Washington imposed its views: Saudi Arabia is not to be entrusted to some French firms as this has

been suggested in the beginning, but to E-Systems from Dallas. The modernization of the phones? The French and the Swedish were on the lists, but when the American Secretary for Trade and, later on, Mr. Bush himself intervened, now ATT and Motorola have better chances. As it seems, the British Prime Minister would have expressed his dissatisfaction! Such a loyal ally ...

But after all -if one neglects the number of those who were killed- perhaps this war will turn out to have been only an even operation for the USA. Besides the fact that this war is being paid for by a large number of countries, the US will also benefit from the large amounts of private dividends that will wipe out the

public expenditures. Thanks heaven, the defence of international law is safe, ... if not, one would easily get inspired about some simple truth, and this is total sacrilege in these days of international sacred union."

This means that the international sacred union had only some validity against Saddam, and, as "Le Monde Diplomatique" seems to regret it, today again the law of the jungle is surpassing all other considerations between capitalists. Those who are the most powerful in the military field, those who invested most in this big war business are the ones who will get the better dividends from this war.

THE MEDIA AS INSTRUMENTS OF POWER AND WAR

In this chapter we will pay special attention to the role played by the media. We do not think that during this war they played a role which is at all different from their ordinary one when they assume a central function in order to mobilize proletarians for the sake of Capital. No!, if in this chapter we are especially dealing with this aspect, it is only because today they are assuming in society as a whole, and they assumed during the Gulf war in particular, -compared to other State apparatus-a more important role than in the past.

As a matter of fact, the type of the process of citizenization, (we published an article on this process (4) which is dominating the proletariat today, coincides with a phase of massive desertion by proletarians of the old bourgeois apparatus, such as parties and unions, which serve the purpose of framing up all proletarian revolt. The influence such bourgeois organisations may have had is slowly but surely eroding. This process also implies that life is becoming more separated, compartmentalized, more individual, more family-like,

more locked up inside each house or apartment... This means that the media -and especially television- become essential means of communication, and transform themselves in decisive means -directly related to their own armed forces- for the framing up, the mobilization and the militarization of the proletariat.

Before, the main intermediary between the worker and his mobilization for the State, his war-like militarization, was the party (the "workers" party, preferably), the union, the "workers' movement"(5). The press and radio were only supports to increase the efficiency of these organizations. But the more individualism is developing, the more television as well as all other means for the production of ideas are transforming themselves to become central intermediaries for the mobilization of proletarians for the fatherland, for sending them to the army and to the butchery! We must not forget that -because of the citizenization process and the generalized isolation- that for many proletarians who do not have any fellow-

(4) See "1984... 1985... 87... 89... pire que prévu - La citoyennisation de la vie" in "Le Communiste" n°27.

(5) It is obvious that we absolutely do not deny that parties and unions, as real apparatus of the capitalist State, continue to have a fundamental role to dominate the proletariat and to ensure capital's capacity to send them to war. We simply want to stress the fact that they are no longer (as this was the case for instance at the end of last century and until the second world war in some countries, or even until recently in some other countries still) at the center of the "collective" life of the worker, a center for discussion, for meeting, i.e. a reference in regard to the relations with the outside world. Today, nearly everywhere, because of the particular form of counterrevolution, this fiction of "collectivity" does not exist any longer and proletarians have been individualised up to a point never known before!

workers to talk to and to discuss with, the television (but the radio and the newspapers, as well) seems to become the unique (fictitious) ("human") relationship with the outside world.

On the whole, the campaigns orchestrated by the different means of communication try to hide the real and fundamental causes of what is going on, and they make this or that individual be guilty for all what is wrong; therefore, in view of the needs of the foreign policy of their own State, these campaigns depict the actions of the enemy as being barbarous, criminal, dictatorial, terrorist,... and at the same time, they justify the criminal actions of their own imperialist camp as humanitarian actions, as a struggle against dictatorship and for democracy...

During the Gulf war, even more so than during previous wars (Vietnam, Falklands, Grenada, Panama, Afghanistan) the Heads of States and the Commanders in Chief of the Allied Armed Forces were particularly attentive to the means of communication: this time they were transformed into real instruments for brainwashing, for militarization and national mobilization.

During the North-American invasion of Grenada and Panama, the Pentagon had already requested and obtained from the press that they would use the word "intervention" rather than "invasion", but during this war, the journalists went a lot further still when they started talking about "our boys" or "us" when talking about the troops of the U.S. coalition. In the same manner, several generals from the Pentagon succeeded each other daily on the television screens of different international networks, which became nothing less than the true spokesmen of the Pentagon (the real public relations offices of the imperialist command). So the journalists started adopting progressively the language of the generals and that's how the bombings became "surgeon attacks" and the civilians killed became "collateral" losses, while the areas that had not yet been bombed, became "lucrative" objectives. In the face of an American POW that had been beaten up, they talked about "war crime" (!!!), but at the same time the terrifying bombings that were killing the population in Baghdad were being presented as "incursions" by "our freedom fighters".

Nothing was left uncontrolled! Each word, each image was checked, analysed, censured... and even sometimes, when there was no image to go with the message that the military and political command had decided to broadcast, they did not hesitate to produce such a suitable image -out of nothing- in their laboratories.

The big bosses of the broadcasting firms, the speakers, the journalists and all the other shitbags accomplished faithfully and wholeheartedly the adaptation and presentation of reality according to the wishes and needs of the military command. The lack of independence, the hypocrisy, the submission and the cynicism of all these presspeople have already often been denounced.. but we think that it would be more proper to speak about the complete and total militarization of this particular instrument of domination, about its achieved integration, by the imperialist State, into the full military action. And as a matter of fact, each time journalists accomplish more perfectly their true role as intermediaries of the military action, as the obeying officers of their superiors, as the indispensable conveyor belt that aims at turning each proletarian into a patriot, a soldier, an assassin!

In the face of such an always growing symbiosis between the army and the television networks, between the generals of the armed forces and the professionals of the spectacle, between the military command and the journalists, we should ask ourselves whether the revolutionary and insurgent proletariat should treat these agents of the means of communication in the same way as it has always treated the officers of the armies, who send the proletarians to the butchery, i.e. by turning their arms against them!? We will get the response from the future history of the war and of the struggle against war, but it is clear that as far as we are concerned, this answer lies already in today's war.

We could multiply here the always more impressive examples of what those craftsmen of the spectacle have achieved to "model" the information according to the needs of the fatherland and of war. We will not go into any more details about the lies that they believed themselves, e.g. when the bosses of the Pentagon declared that about 90% of the military potential of the Iraqi army had been annihilated (after "only" 24 hours of bombings), a piece of information that the media quickly broadcast over the whole planet! We will not go into any details about the praise from all the presspeople for the "heroism and sacrifices" consented by the pilots of the Coalition (indeed, how courageous it must have been to drop bombs with an absolute power of destruction, from a height of 10,000 meters!). And it is not worthwhile either to insist on the sheer hypocrisy and the total partiality that completely dominated the propaganda on the use of chemical weapons by Baghdad (in reality, Baghdad has only used such weapons against its own troops and population) while nothing was ever said about the use of napalm and fuel bombs by the Allied forces. Nor will we insist on the total partiality with which the "daily horror that Israeli citizens had to go through" was described (mentioning only the Jews; the horror for the

Palestinians surely was not the same -as a matter of fact, a government decree stated that there were not any gas masks available for them! while the horror that came pouring down on the population of Iraq was systematically omitted!

No, all this is only normal for these shock troops of the Western Christian army. We would rather like to denounce here some elements in this manipulation of the news. We already knew that they created images, and that a large number of them -shown on television-were created in computer laboratories. This was the case for instance for those images that showed missiles hitting their military target exactly in the middle: in fact, these images had been shot several years ago in the United States. But undoubtedly, this is when the modern Goebbels of the little screen excelled: when they tried to accuse their opponent of not only wasting oil, but also of exterminating nature and the environment(6). This is when they built up the pitiful story about a bird covered with black liquid, the bird that they had found dying in the sea. This story, and these images showing that dying bird, representing the destruction of nature-something only "bad" people could possibly desire and provoke on purpose-were circulated around the world. And probably public opinion has been more influenced and upset about this dying bird ... than it has ever been about any other victim being shown on TV (and of course, they do not talk about these real deaths). This shows how extreme the manipulation can be, this gigantic collective idiocy produced by Capital. Everything seemed to work out just fine ... until a specialist turned up to explain that this kind of bird does not live in the Persian Gulf area, but lives on the European coasts... and that's how it became obvious that this story as well was nothing else but a pure strategic laboratory invention, launched with some political-military goal.

But we do want to mention it as a significant example of this war-the sudden general discovery of the massacres committed by the regime of Saddam Hussein, massacres that we have denounced for years, against the stream, in spite of the fact that our contradicts accused us of "exaggeration" or even "invention". For several years we have denounced the tens of thousands of deaths that (during the war and after the signing of the cease-fire between Iraq and Iran) were caused by the bombings that the Iraqi State carried out against its own population, while we also denounced the systematic

(6) It is obvious that all ideological construction bases itself on reality and on the deformation of that reality. In this case, reality means that for Capital, and therefore for all imperialist sides, nature is only of little importance (because for all of them, only the law of capital exists as an immutable law, i.e. the law of the highest rate of profit that dominates the whole environment). And that's why poor mother nature becomes always-in wartime as well as in times of peace-more degraded, be it in the middle of huge industrial areas, or in the middle of the always growing desert.

destruction of tens of cities and small villages. Speaking about the tens of thousands of deaths, about the hundreds of cities destroyed, has been considered to be an enormous exaggeration on our part, including at the time when we called for an international meeting that we had organized against the war and the peace in this region. As a matter of fact, nobody talked about all this, while all of a sudden, during the war, the Western bourgeois press "discovered" the massacres that it had been hiding for years! It was the "Figaro" newspaper (sic!) that, in an article from March 1991, wrote:

"Neither in Iran [sic!], nor in Syria [sic!], or in Turkey [sic!] did the Kurds experience such a brutality in repression. This brutality reached a peak at the end of the Iran-Iraq war, in 1988. In March of that year, while Saddam was winning every battle against the Khomeini troops and was forcing them to accept a cease-fire, he finally finds himself free enough to clean up Kurdistan. The Kurdish rebels are like ants, we will crush them," warns an Iraqi general. And just like on ants, Saddam will use chemicals on the Kurds. More than 5,000 will get killed in the city of Halabja alone, the city will be completely destroyed and will be rebuilt 30 kilometers further away; altogether 4,000 cities and villages will be wiped out, erased from the map, and their population will be transferred to other areas that are easier to check for the Iraqi army. The poor and miserable families are packed in sordid townships with large alleys where armed vehicles can take up position at any moment. In the middle of the desert, the Iraqi State has installed real concentration camps, disguised as military bases, to imprison the most rebellious amongst the population. According to Sami Abdurrahman, the General Secretary of the People's Party of Kurdistan, 50,000 Kurds have disappeared in this sand-goulag.

This is only one example among many others. In reality, the whole of the main information agencies of the Christian Western world, mobilized for this new crusade, all of a sudden discovered what they had decided to ignore, for years, and at the same time the heads of the Kurdish nationalist opposition parties were for the first time well received in the Western imperial centers of power, and indeed, in the Pentagon itself. Their declarations were widely echoed by television and by the other different means of production of the reality of public opinion.

In Iraq, nearly ten years of war and of struggle against war did not take place in vain. Those hundreds of thousands of workers in uniform were no longer ready to sacrifice themselves for the national cause of the war. From the very beginning of the war, the only non-official information that we received from Iran and Iraq stated that those who had been forcefully sent on the battlefronts, tried to escape from there and that there had been many desertions and executions. Comrades from that region also confirmed -a long time

ON THE BALANCE OF FORCES BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT BLOCS AND ON THE SHORT DURATION OF THE WAR

The deployment of military troops by both sides does not leave any doubt about the fact that a longer lasting military confrontation was expected. On the other hand, the analysis by military experts all concluded about the same perspective of a longer lasting war and-as far as the Western Coalition was concerned-a more murderous one! The tens of thousands of plastic bags that the American authorities had delivered in the area to "go back home" (as it was written in certain songs by American soldiers) do not allow for the slightest doubt about this.

If the war - in its phase of more general confrontation between the Coalition armies and the troops of the Iraqi State - has met a definite limit (while we're writing this text, the war between different bourgeois factions inside Iraq is still going on), this is surely due to the complete lack of support that the imperialist policy of Saddam Hussein has encountered and to the ensuing weakness of his imperialist bloc and this has allowed its enemy to reach its objectives with much less damage than was initially estimated.

We already announced the weakness of the imperialist bloc directed by the Iraqi State, precisely because Saddam Hussein has been completely discredited in the face of his own troops and population (cf. the editorial of "Communisme" -French central review- n°32). Today we can affirm clearly that this constituted the main obstacle -and indeed the real break- for the continuation of the war.

We do not think it is necessary to go into any other explanations about the decisive importance of the adhesion of the proletariat to the imperialist war... since without such adhesion there simply cannot be any war like that, as all the burden of bourgeois war, from the battle ground unto the production lines, lies on the shoulders of the proletarians.

In Iraq, nearly ten years of war and of struggle against war did not take place in vain. Those hundreds of thousands of workers in uniform were no longer ready to sacrifice themselves for the national cause of the war. From the very beginning of the war, the only non-official information that we received from Iran and Iraq stated that those who had been forcefully sent on the battlefronts, tried to escape from there and that there had been many desertions and executions. Comrades from that region also confirmed -a long time

before official sources from both sides could no longer hide the fact that the Iraqi troops were not ready to fight any more, and before the mass surrenders were shown on television-that the butchery was looking more and more like a war of extermination and that the common Iraqi soldier was trapped between two enemy fires: the fire of the Coalition and the fire of the Republican Guards.

To put it clearly, from the point of view of the Iraqi State, everything had been going wrong from the very beginning: there had been no decisive international support on the military and political level (the small support the Iraqi State did receive-like from the PLO e.g.- did not have any real significance); it failed in its attempt to make Israel get directly involved in the war and to build up this way a general front against it; there was very little credibility of Saddam's so-called anti-imperialism with the international masses, and this resulted in the complete lack of positive response to Saddam's different calls, including the lack of response concerning his call for terrorist attacks, ... Even the Republican Guards did not show any full disposition for fighting and here also desertions were more massive than initially expected.

In view of the composition of the Coalition forces - composed of all the bigger international watchdogs of imperialism (USA, France, England,... and also with the complicity of the Soviet Union) and also in view of the intrinsic secular hate that the world proletariat feels for them (in general, it is these powers which always intervene to put down proletarian revolts and which always support the local bourgeois when the national State can no longer cope with an insurrectionary situation!), Saddam Hussein hoped to be able to raise the banner of the struggle against imperialism, as some others had already done-with more success though-before him. Saddam Hussein is not Nasser, nor Peron or even less so Che Guevara; Saddam is nothing else but an already ancient agent in that region, having the same interests as those who he is pretending to fight today. He is the agent of France, of the Soviet Union,... and above all, he is a tyrant having lost all credibility in the face of his own population that he has bombed without mercy; he is a tyrant incapable of achieving national unity which is the indispensable condition for the realization of an international front capable of forcing the big powers to negotiate.

Of course, there have been some demos in several countries, like in North-Africa or in Europe, in the Far East or in Latin America, where the crowds -amongst other claims- shouted some slogans in favour of Saddam, but without any real conviction and more as a provocation in the face of their own State (like in Spain, e.g.) when it was being considered to be too submitted to the Western Christian bloc. In quite a few cases also, the slogans in support of the Iraqi State, were nothing else but the result of the manoeuvres and manipulations by the local national State so as to take away all credit from the struggle against the war by assimilating this struggle against the bourgeoisie and its State as a struggle in support of the external enemy.

Even the bourgeois organizations of the radical left of the Western countries, always eager to sell their anti-imperialist speeches - and indeed, Saddam and Arafat hoped these would take their side - had only little autonomy in the face of their own national State (probably this is due to the general down graded situation of these organizations) and they all just claimed some vague pacifist rhetorics: indeed, it was difficult to distinguish between the speeches held by a Stalinist, by a Castroist or by a Trotskyist and the speeches held by the pope!

There were some "remarkable" exceptions to the cause of international Trotskyism: for the Argentinian MAS e.g. it was no problem to take up the imperialist side of the butcher of Baghdad. The leaflets of this group, defending one imperialist camp against another, while hiding systematically all references to the

murderous past (and present) of the Baghdad regime, for sure are part of the anthology of this war. We will just quote a small part of one of the leaflets of this group:

"When the war breaks out, there will be two clearly defined opposite military camps. One will be the aggressor camp, under the lead of the yankees and the support of Gorbatchev, as well as a long list of lackey governments. Through war, these will pursue, on a higher level still, the aggression that they triggered 5 months ago, through their military blockade and their economic genocide. The other side will be the side of Iraq. On this side we will find the Palestinians of the Intifada, millions of inhabitants from the Arab and Islam countries, as well as thousands of militants amongst the workers and the people who everywhere in the world, oppose the aggression. The Movement for Socialism (MAS) calls on all workers and on the people of Argentina, to support the Iraqi side. We are in the same boat as during the Falklands' war (THIS IS CLEAR! It is the same boat that they share with the Argentinian head of State terrorists who are guilty of killing and torturing, and of the disappearance of tens of thousands of our comrades - our comment!) when received the support of the majority of the people of Latin America and of large parts of the people of the Middle East, including the Iraqi people."

(quotation from a leaflet "Yesterday the Falklands, today Iraq; Yankees, out of the Gulf" calling for a "day against the imperialist aggression".)

THE MILITARY SUPERIORITY OF THE COALITION FORCES — AGAINST THE MYTH OF TECHNOLOGY

Let's get back to the essential, to the real limits of the war, since there existed an undeniable superiority of the Coalition forces. From all sides they tried to make us believe that the impressive triumph of the Coalition forces is due to their technological development, to the astonishing efficiency of their military equipment, etc.

The bourgeoisie tries to make us believe that nothing depends on us, that everything depends on technology, that the latter is opposed to us (even though it is our own product) as an alien power that is oppressing and controlling us. The interest of the bourgeoisie is obvious. With such propaganda, they are

telling us: "I'm almighty", "you can do nothing", "In the face of the State, you don't stand a chance".

But when thinking about this, one soon realizes that all this is nothing but a big lie. During the Vietnam war, the North-American State had a complete technological superiority, but was unable to win the war. The same happened to the Russian army in Afghanistan. Even more so, the same technology that supposedly destroyed one of the best equipped armies of the world, cannot manage to defeat a few hundred of guerrilleros in other parts of the world, like in Peru, for instance.

Every military strategist, from Clausewitz until today, knows that the keyfactor in all wars, is the human factor, the adhesion of the part of the population to the military policy, and it is this factor that determines the moral of the troops, the efficiency of the production front, the logistic capacities, etc. And it is sure, from this point of view, that there was -as we just wrote- an enormous difference between the two sides. On one side, a well disciplined army, ready to go to war, and on the other side, hundreds of thousands of men, forced to go to war at gunpoint and here every soldier was a potential deserter. On one side, a very mobile army with a nearly unlimited capacity to deploy itself, the soldiers of which -at least a large majority of them- are free citizens who signed a contract to sell their capacity to kill ("workforce") (7); on the other side, a kind of formation and deployment on the battleground where the officers and the pretorian troops have to maintain a permanent pressure on their subordinates in order to prevent massive desertions.

All this determined a type of war with positions that favoured even more the Coalition. Indeed, the type of army and armement that was being used by the Coalition proved to be very appropriate to attack and destroy the fixed positions of the enemy. The situation is completely different when an army of this kind must transform itself into an army of occupation and for maintaining law and order, and when it is confronting a kind of popular war, facing autonomous military units. In such situations, the strategic advantage that derives from the support for the war effort by large parts of the population, disappears as time goes by. This is exactly what is happening today to the Israeli State for instance, since it is caught up relatively powerless in a war of occupation without any perspectives for a positive evolution - quite to the contrary of what happened during its blitz-victories in the past. If the North-American command of the Coalition forces interrupted its military actions before destroying the whole of the Iraqi military potentials, it is because they know that after all Saddam Hussein is a good guardian

of bourgeois order. Even though it would have been relatively easy for the Marines to go further as far as Baghdad, it would have been much more difficult for them to pacify the population in this region, in the face of an Intifada a hundred times more powerful.

The technological superiority of one of the imperialist sides, and the never ending bombings that lasted for days and days without any possibility for the adversary to do anything about it, functionned exactly on the basis of these two fundamental conditions: the lack of eagerness to fight and the kind of war of positions that this determined (and also the acceptance of the classical bourgeois diplomacy by Saddam Hussein and the consecutive liberation of all the important persons belonging to the enemy camp by Saddam Hussein -because without this for sure the bombings would have encountered less national and international support). After weeks of bombings that accentuated even more the generalized weaknesses of Saddam's troops, the initial difference in the moral of troops between both sides became even bigger, and Saddam's imperialist army decomposed without having fought one single important battle (in spite of the press' exaggerations about the "Khafji battle") (8).

On the other hand, these intensive bombings disintegrated the whole regional system of political control of the Iraqi State! The orders from Baghdad did not get through any more to the troops, nor did they reach the remote villages of the southern provinces; it took days and days for news from different geographical points to reach Baghdad, and this -in such a situation of lack of national unity- was fatal to the Iraqi military command.

So tens of thousands of new deserters united with the numerous deserters from the Iran-Iraq war, as well as with those who had never submitted themselves and those who had organized themselves from the very beginning of the war and who were just waiting for the right moment to desert or surrender. Desertion became

(7) As for any other kind of sale of the commodity "workforce", the free decision is determined by the freedom to face starvation; in this particular case, by the alternative: to go to war or to starve! In the United States, since the misery of the lower strata of the proletariat is so violent and since the possibilities to find a job are nearly inexistent, the only way to survive is to join the army! This reality affects more particularly blacks, Portoricans, and also the "sans réserves" of Mexican, Central-American... origins, and that is why there is a much higher proportion of these fractions of the proletariat in the army than there is in the civil population. But in spite of this, in spite of the contradictions that derive from this and in spite of the enormous possibilities for revolt that exist in this army, it is sure that the coherence of any military body is much superior when this body is composed of wage-labourers rather than when it has been composed through forced conscription (as al major wars in history have shown us!)

(8) In the beginning, when this city was conquered by part of the Iraqi army, North American television talked about a "mosquito bite on an elephant skin"; but the next day, after the Coalition forces had reconquered the city, the battle all of a sudden became "an important military victory for the Coalition!"

even more massive as officers themselves deserted and as the lack of food became more and more widespread. That's how the Coalition got a much easier victory than expected: besides, it did not really know what to do with such a victory, because it was no longer possible to hide that the cohesion of the enemy had been exaggerated for the sake of propaganda, and also because it had not prepared to round up such a high number of prisoners. The Coalition military Command was very embarrassed having to take care of more than a hundred thousand men... so embarrassed that on several occasions the

American officers ordered to shoot on the Iraqi soldiers who came running towards them - in spite of the white flag they were waving as a sign of surrender. For sure the Allied Command would have preferred desertions to be less massive on the Iraqi side, and the imperialist war to last a bit longer - so as to account more easily (as well as in the face of the ordinary American citizen, as of the parliamentarians of the bourgeoisie) for the 500,000 men they sent to the Gulf together with all other military and logistical efforts.

★

THE STRUGGLE OF THE PROLETARIAT AGAINST THE WAR

Historically, the proletariat has proved its enormous creativity in the struggle against war: the sabotage of military trains, the execution of officers, internationalist propaganda, revolutionary defeatism, massive organization of deserters, the constitution of unitary workers' and soldiers' associations, strikes, demos,... In the face of the highest level of barbarity of capitalist domination, everything is valuable and every action against "the holy union" transforms itself into an action of internationalist solidarity against the war.

We could draw up a list of the proletarian actions against the war that occurred in different countries. But it is more important to draw up a much more global balance-sheet of the forces that existed during the struggle against the war, and we must cry out the truth that imposes itself and that we must recognize: the proletariat has been incapable of stopping the war, and especially on the side of the Coalition; capitalism reached its objectives of national mobilization and of the submission of the proletarians to the interests of the national States. Indeed, it is more important to stress this, than to mention the number of national flags that were burnt, the international leaflets that have been circulated, the schools that have been occupied (like in Italy and in Spain), the occupation of/or demos against recruitment offices, the number of deserters that have fled.

For us this general situation is logical, since counter-revolution is dominating on a nearly generalized scale, and in such a context we are rather glad that some violent actions against the war did take place. But the situation is really tragic, and every apology of some acts

of resistance as if the proletariat finds itself in a revolutionary period, can only serve counter-revolution. We have to start out from this very elementary truth, that cannot be hidden: hour after hour, day after day, week after week, we were unable to stop one of the largest massacres in history, one that can be compared to the massacres in Hiroshima, Nagasaki or Dresden during the second world war. The massacre of our brothers took place while the bourgeoisie placed the world proletariat in front of the television screens so as to show them the horrible spectacle!

In relation to the weakness that we already talked about concerning the army of the Iraqi State, we must stress that the strength and coherence of the Coalition armies is shocking, especially as far as the passive but massive support by the rear-guard for these armies is concerned. The strength of the armies of the main international watchdogs of Capital lies within the weakness of the struggle of the proletariat in these countries.

It is obvious that the fact that nearly all deaths were only on one side, and that on the side of the Coalition the war did not cost much in terms of life or in terms of survival (the increase in misery cannot be compared to what happened on the other side), all this facilitated national unity, the submission of the proletariat to its own State, and the coherence of the armies of the US-led Coalition. The existing correlation of counterrevolutionary forces could only be put into question if the proletariat of the Coalition countries had also had to support the burden of the war, and if, on top of an intensification of the austerity-policies in those

countries, thousands of plastic bags "bringing home" the "heroic freedom fighters" had arrived at the airports of the Coalition countries. In today's circumstances, when the "bourgeois" and "proletarians" are together celebrating the allied military victory, sharing the same criminal satisfaction about the fact that the victims remained in Iraq and Kuwait, in such circumstances it is counterrevolution itself that can fortify the perception of the proletariat as an organic and single body, by the exacerbation of the misery it causes!

So we must assume this sad reality where the international proletariat is standing, incapable of stopping the war (and we must remember that the most important limit to the Vietnam war, was the North-American proletariat itself!) or even of assuming really important actions of struggle against it! We do not want to devalorize the actions of some proletarians who refused, e.g., in certain harbours, to load arms to be sent to the Gulf region, nor the violent actions against this or that center for recruitment in the USA, but it is tragic that there was no uprising amongst the troops that were sent to fight on behalf of the Coalition; it is tragic that there were only a few tens of deserters (while on the other side, there were several tens of thousands!), that there were no important attacks against official buildings of the Coalition forces; it is tragic that the military production, as well as production in general, did not get paralyzed, so as to fight against the criminal politics of our "own" States. And finally, the most tragic of all is the terrible state of atomized individuals to which large parts of the proletariat are reduced today, sitting in front of a television screen, or

participating in some pacifist demo that reinforces the national mobilization and the military actions of the imperialist State.

Without any doubt, one of the most difficult problems to solve, as well in the past as for the future of the worldwide revolution, is this tragic difference between the development of the struggle in one or another country: this is how the bourgeoisie can afford to send troops from one country to repress the insurrection that is going on in another country, as it happened so many times in history, transforming the proletariat in one country into the accomplice of the State repressing the proletariat elsewhere. There is no doubt about the fact that the trajectory of the States of the Coalition and more specifically of the North-American State, as well as the present affirmations (practical and military, as well as in all official speeches) as the international police force of the State of "International Law", designate these States to be the watchdogs against insurrectionary movements in other countries. In the struggle against this, the responsibility of the proletariat in these specific countries is obvious. But this also requires the necessity for a general staff of the international proletariat, the importance of the centralisation of the proletarian community of struggle based on the communist programme. In relation to this, the critique of the complete failure -through opportunism, centrism, euro-centrism, federalism, nationalism- of the Third International (that, from the 2nd Congress onward, adopted the tactic of national liberation that objectively divided the proletariat and this way became the accomplice of the bourgeoisie) is essential.

THE SITUATION IN IRAQ

On the Iraqi side, defeatism was general. We already described how the Iraqi State sent tens of thousands of proletarians in uniform to the front, to serve as cannon-fodder. But in the face of this situation, the proletariat did not remain passive. Struggles occurred even before the beginning of the bombings by the Coalition armies. In Mossoul, in the North of Iraq, in Kurdistan, people rioted against the famine that resulted from the "war restrictions" that had been imposed jointly by the Iraqi State and the Coalition. In Sulaimaniya, in the North also, demos against the war were organized by women. The Republican Guards intervened and fired at the crowd. 300 women were arrested and executed a bit

later. But in the South of Iraq also, the situation remained very tense in the face of the perspectives of the bombings and the launching of this war, in which proletarians knew they had nothing to win.

So even before the launching of the terrestrial offensive, the general situation in Iraq was very explosive, and for this reason, for fear of an insurrection, Saddam Hussein made thousands of leaflets to be thrown down by airplane, recalling the Halabja massacre. This is how he wanted proletarians who were ready to rise up against him, to remember that the State would not hesitate to bomb or gas them

if they refused to submit themselves to his war-plans. Saddam Hussein did not have time to execute his threats since the Coalition offensive was launched even before he could put down this defeatist resistance.

This is how, from the very moment that the warplanes from the Coalition had started dropping their tons of bombs on the South of Iraq at first, crushing the proletarians who were hiding in shelters or in caves, these proletarians started moving up to Baghdad, fleeing the areas of famine and desolation; they were immediately joined by thousands of starved deserters. In the face of this situation, the Iraqi State had no other solution but to move more reliable troops from the North into the area to prevent these thousands of proletarians from fleeing to Baghdad. But while moving these more loyal troops to the South, the Iraqi State destabilized even more the situation in the North, where the uprisings were the most violent, straight after the terrestrial offensive.

This resistance of proletarians in Iraq and the defeatism they were capable of -even before the launching of the terrestrial offensive- were the first cause for the ending of the war between the Coalition and Iraq. Even more so since on the front, right after the beginning of the war, tens of thousands of other proletarians surrendered and refused to sacrifice their blood for the imperialist crusade of Saddam. During these few days when the Republican Guards had to confront an enemy that was really armed, one could easily see that their eagerness to fight was much weaker than when they were fighting proletarians who refused to go to the battlefields. On this occasion, tens of

thousands of proletarians got completely "out of control", and at the same time when they were fighting for their own survival while attacking private property, they were clashing with their enemy of always, their "own" State.

From the first days of March 1991, the newsgencies of the whole world had to mention the attacks and

arson of official buildings and Baath'party buildings, but as we already mentioned, the struggle did not start nor did it end here: as a matter of fact, a real tendency for generalization existed. The press mentioned only certain attacks by the proletariat against the State in Iraq, in order to better justify the Coalition's massive massacres as a "public health operation". The Coalition wanted the actions against the war, the desertions of proletarians, the uprisings against famine... to be depicted as struggles against a detested tyrant, and not as a more general struggle against capitalist war. For the State organized around the Coalition, the biggest danger lies in a possible contamination of these defeatist struggles within its own army. In the face of a generalization of the desertions and struggles in Iraq, the soldiers of the Coalition could easily have become aware that they were not fighting against thousands of fanatic "Saddamised" terrorists, as they had been made to believe, but that they were in fact participating in a butchery that had been organised against the masses of proletarians in Iraq and in Kuwait.

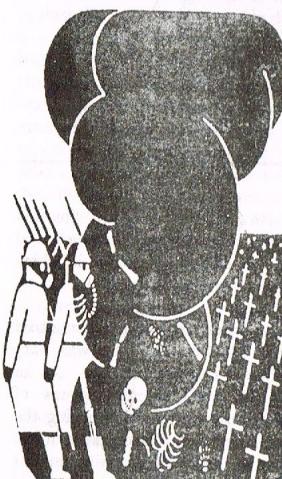
The worldwide bourgeoisie had a feeling of general terror when considering the possibility that the defeatism against the State of Saddam Hussein might affirm itself as revolutionary defeatism. This is one of the reasons that made Bush decide -in spite of the many international calls for the destruction of the complete military potential of Saddam- to stop the war only a few days after having launched the battle against the Republican Guards. This is how he tried to ensure the integrity of this anti-proletarian and repressive organ, the Republican Guard. General Kelly declared explicitly:

"It is a defeated army that is going back home. A beaten army always constitutes a political threat."

The Washington Post itself reproduced declarations by Iraqi bourgeois opposition leaders that were in contradiction with the general analysis which pretended that what was going on, was a national or religious problem. For instance, this paper reproduced the following declarations by Muhammad Bahr Ulum:

"This is not a religious problem, but the first popular uprising in 20 years against the reign of Saddam Hussein. His defeat in Kuwait has broken the reign of terror."

And as a matter of fact, while they were trying once more to make us believe that the struggles that erupted after the war are about religious problems, or even about national questions -as far as the Kurdistan area is concerned- we know, as far as we are concerned, that these struggles are much more the direct continuity of the struggles that occurred before and during the war.



And for this reason, the Coalition's interest was for Saddam Hussein to assume himself the continuity of repression organized by the means of the Republican Guards.

Uprisings took place nearly everywhere, as soon as the war stopped. Bassorah, in the South, Mossoul, Arbil, Kirkouk, Sulaimania, in the North, were in a state of insurrection. The rest of the defeated army, the deserters, the inhabitants of the cities, united themselves to cry out their anger and hatred of the State in the face of those who had sent them to war. In the South, clashes were particularly violent, but the Republican Guards were prepared for it: they had already been concentrated in this region because the State knew very well the explosive situation that prevailed here. In the North, Saddam hoped for some respite since he knew he could count on the nationalists. He hoped that they would be capable of framing up and defeating the proletariat, and he knew for sure that they would not engage in any action against him. Indeed, from the very beginning of the war, Saddam Hussein and the nationalist parties had reached some secret agreement via the PLO and its beloved leader, Yasser Arafat, guaranteeing the pacific coexistence between these two bourgeois factions for the whole duration of the war. This is why repression first hit struggles in the South.

But the uprisings in the North took place in spite of all official "opposition", and in spite of and against the KDP, PUK and all other Kurdish nationalist organizations. From the very start, these factions were recognized as being "war-participationists" and their attempts to frame up the insurgents by putting forward nationalist perspectives, did not work out. Other groups rose up, such as "Communist Perspective" in Sulaimania, an internationalist organization that resulted from the lessons of the preceding struggles. And other groups as well, all more or less formal, and which all clearly designated the nationalists as enemies as dangerous as the Republican Guard. The insurgent proletarians refused to let nationalists enter the cities. The latter then tried to encircle the cities, meeting this way many soldiers on their way home from the front. These soldiers did not want to fight any more, but on several occasions, the nationalists forced them to join their ranks and fight. As one can see, a nation-to-be uses the same terrorist methods as the nation it is fighting against. Here, Saddam Hussein and Talabani stand hand in hand to send proletarians to the front at gunpoint. The encircling of the cities by the nationalist parties, allowed them to make the world believe that they were "in control" of these cities; but the only control that they actually assumed, was the control of the repression of proletarians returning home from the front. These pieces of information that have been reported directly to us by contacts, sympathisers and

comrades from that region, are corroborated by the fact that Talabani e.g., the boss of the PUK, has not been able to return to Sulaimania even though this city was considered to be his stronghold before.

It is exactly in this city, that the insurrection was particularly violent: here proletarians took revenge for years and years of massacres and organized terror that they had been submitted to. They attacked the terrifying secret police of Saddam Hussein, killing some 2,000 Baathists, who were hiding in the buildings of the political police. The anger of our fellow proletarians turned against everything that represented the Iraqi State, as they burnt, looted and entirely demolished all buildings belonging to the police, to the Baath' party, courts, etc. During all this time, the nationalist parties tried to oppose this, arguing that the material that could be found in these buildings, would be useful to the future Kurdish State!

To put down this generalized proletarian revolt, Saddam Hussein sent his most loyal troops to clear the region, after Bassorah and the other insurgent cities of the South had been crushed! As soon as the Republican Guards got closer to the North, and as the first reports about their atrocities arrived, as soon as the proletariat realized that the Republican Guards had succeeded partially in crushing the South and that white terror was coming up North, towards the Kurdistan region, as soon as the insurgents realized that the Coalition armies had left the Republican Guard nearly unharmed and in any case sufficiently powerful to organize the terror against them, they withdrew from the cities towards the mountains, with their arms, luggage, children, trying to escape by all possible means the repressive hell that was about to hit them. We already gave some examples of the violence with which the insurgents struggled against local authorities and it is easy to understand that they expected the worst of the Republican Guards. For tens of years they had been submitted to the repression by the shock troops of the Iraqi regime, and they knew they should not expect any mercy of them.

The whole of the information was transmitted to us directly by comrades from that region who had participated in these struggles. We do not possess yet all the details about the different clashes and confrontations that we have mentioned (one can easily imagine all the difficulties for these comrades to communicate with us, in view of the horror of the defeat that they are submitted to today!), but of course we will continue to centralize all the information that these comrades will give us. As soon as the war started and at the very moment when the bombings started, these comrades also circulated an "appeal against the war" that was produced by our group, in Arabic. Other material produced by our group was also circulated,

before and during the war.

A few days after the "anniversary" of the Halabja massacre, while the struggle was fully going on, particularly in the North of Iraq, in the Kurdistan region, our group sent a leaflet there, in Kurdish, which was also circulated in the area. Here are some excerpts from this leaflet that was called: "No Kurdish nation! No Islamic republic!" and that focused mainly on the critique of nationalism, in all its forms.

"The Halabja massacre and all other filthy nationalist actions are the arms of democracy (...) The proletarians and the exploited from Kurdistan, as all the exploited of the world, can only abolish misery by turning their guns against the Kurdish nationalists and by treating them the same way as they have been treating the Baathist State. The bourgeois are our enemy, wherever they may be. So, what can be the difference that the nationalists make between "the external enemy", the "momentaneous enemy", the "main enemy", small or big? (...) The Halabja massacre is the direct result of the law of this class society, as history has proved us a thousand times. As soon as the revolutionary movement fights against Capital and its nationalists, as soon as Capital loses control, the only response by the bourgeoisie will be the massacre of proletarians!

History has given us many examples: Kronstadt and Petrograd in Russia, Dresden in Germany, Sabra and Shatila by Israel and the Arab States, Halabja by the Baathist party... without mentioning all the examples that have been hidden from us.

The official media of the whole world, together with all types of Marxist-Leninist groups, have collected money in the name of the Halabja massacre by spreading their lies about these events. In this job, all their lies have been cautioned by the dogs Talabani (PUK) and Houshiar Zebari (KDP) (...) The nationalist bourgeois have prevented the population of Halabja from leaving the city before the chemical bomb attacks, while letting their own relatives and militants go (...) Capital itself engenders war, misery, illness and repression. The

Halabja massacre is the direct product of money and work. This massacre has been perpetuated with the help of the Western countries. They arranged themselves to put all the blame on Saddam Hussein, while putting their horrible pictures in their papers. (...).

Down with the State!
For a classless society!
Towards the victory of the struggle for communism!"



Taking into account the insurrectionary movements that spontaneously shook many Iraqi cities, before, during and especially after the war, one can easily understand why the Coalition powers did not have any interest in completely destroying the Republican Guard, once they were sure about their own victory. If the Coalition army had destroyed the Republican Guard, then it would have been up to them to confront the insurgents and to ensure social peace and this would have implied a very high political and military cost for them. On top of this, none of the other bourgeois factions in Iraq represents a valuable alternative for the main power involved in the Gulf war: the imperialist giant called USA.

Kurdish nationalist autonomy is being considered to be too destabilizing for the whole region, and besides - as soon as the outcome of its military confrontation with Iraq was clear- the Pentagon stopped flirting with the Kurdish nationalist leaders. In the same manner, Washington is considering the establishment of an Iran-like Islamic republic to be dangerous and contradictory with the other imperialist interests in that region. This is why, during the decisive days when the fall of Saddam Hussein seemed most likely, all observers were surprised once more by the support the Coalition powers gave to the Iraqi leader whom only a few days earlier they had called "the new Hitler". For us, this stands as an additional proof for our analysis of Capital, as far as the fragility of inter-imperialist alliances is concerned. For sure, the Coalition would prefer the same Baathist party to maintain law and order in Iraq, but headed by somebody with more credibility than Saddam Hussein.

THE WAR AND ITS PERSPECTIVE

It is the proletariat that constituted the real limit of the war, and above all, the proletariat in Iraq that broke national unity and assumed defeatist struggles. But the limit was also made up by proletarians from other countries who did not participate in the imperialist crusade that Saddam and some others -under the cover

of anti-imperialism- had called for. The disequilibrium between imperialist powers was such that it became impossible to continue generalized war.

Nevertheless, from the point of view of the US and of its allies, the whole operation did bring about a

positive political and military outcome, especially because of the lack of struggle and of proletarian autonomy against the war. A bourgeois outcome of course, not only in relation to the commercial business of the war (who would still buy Russian tanks today?) but also and especially, because of the national and international mobilization and because of the reconstitution and consolidation of the spirit of the most important military power in the world!

From the latter point of view, the war has reached the capitalist and imperialist objectives that were searched for. However, from the most global point of view, from the point of view of the general need for destruction, which will only serve to open a new phase of reconstruction and expansion, there is no doubt about the fact that the Gulf war was completely inadequate. However lucrative the commercial deals are, the ones that many different factions of Capital contracted during the war and during the period of reconstruction in this area, the destructions caused by the war were very small compared to today's necessities for the destruction of capital.

Capitalism needs war still a lot more. This is why we insist that much on the actual limits of the war, because the tendency for a more generalized war remains acute. And nobody can guarantee that today's limits of this war will also be the limits capable of preventing the generalisation of another war tomorrow. The difference between today's blocs and the lack of adhesion to one of them, cannot be a permanent limit for other wars to come. As a matter of fact, because of the rapidity in the changing of interbourgeois alliances -engendered by the depression and today's crisis- and also because of the experience from this last war that will push the weaker factions of the bourgeoisie into making concession to an even higher degree so as to reinforce their bloc and

engage into military actions - one can foresee the coming of more equally balanced polarizations, in terms of military power, that will be much more dangerous for the world proletariat. In the future war, there will not be on one side a giant and on the other side a dwarf, but there will be two opposed giants, and not only in military terms, but also in terms of the power that derives from the different myths about the "causes to defend the nation".

Here we have to mention that the weakness of Saddam Hussein does not exclude the possible coming of much more radical factions that will be capable of raising the banner of "third world" ideology or radical anti-imperialism in a much more coherent manner. These factions would also be capable of giving rise to a popular mobilization of the entire nation for waging war in a much less conventional way and therefore in a much more murderous way in regard to the troops of the main imperialist watchdog. Neither can we discard at all the possibility that there might be a more general decomposition of the stronger bloc in this war and the birth of new polarizations between the main industrial powers, including from within the bosom of each country. We cannot either discard the possibility that the standards of international trade will completely explode, opposing e.g. the bourgeois factions in favour of the complete application of the law of international value to other more protectionist factions. Such a polarization would be the most logical and profound one to develop during the coming years: however, it will only become a material force if it manages to crystallise itself in a discourse capable of mobilizing the masses and of inducing the proletariat to kill and die for the fatherland. Such a polarization will appear with completely different discourses and ideological justifications (we discard the reappearance of the old fascism/anti-fascism form) which, however, are not ripe yet.

OUR ACTION AGAINST WAR, FOR THE CENTRALISATION OF ALL INTERNATIONAL FORCES

We are not creators of parties, nor do we create "Internationals". We start from the existing reality of which our group is also a product. However, by reappropriating the historical program of our class and Party, we try to transform ourselves to become active factors, i.e. organised, disciplined, conscious agents.

The community of struggle against capitalism and war is an objective reality that emerges from the interests of the proletariat in opposition to the interests of Capital, its economy, its wars. With its strength and

its weaknesses, the common action of the proletariat forges it as a class, as a unified force. The ICG is an expression of this process and it fights, on the highest possible international level, to centralise this force, so as to build up an international direction according to the interests of the proletariat and the historical program of communism.

We repeat here each one of our calls for revolutionary defeatism and for the organisation of the community of struggle against the war. This is why we

advise our readers, who have not read all our publications, to read more in particular the following issues of the French language review "Communism" (before "Le Communiste"): 7, 25, 27 and 29 in which we have developed a whole series of appeals and propositions. In very concrete terms of activity, our group proposed in all these texts:

- the coordination of the internationalist activity together with the whole of organisations and proletarian groups that fight against the war, to turn back our arms against those who send us to war, for revolutionary defeatism.

- the organisation of the circulation of information about struggles of this kind, and especially about the Middle East, in view of the very explosive character of the contradiction between war and revolution in this area.

- to reinforce and centralise the different networks for the survival of proletarians in struggle, prisoners, fugitives, exiles, ...

- to circulate the different texts and material in different areas of the world, such as texts about the struggles and other internationalist activities, as well as more historical texts that lay out the never changing perspectives of communism.

Whatever might be the immediate developments of the war situation in this region, the Gulf war has re-actualized the contradiction of always: war or revolution, capitalist civilization or communism, and therefore it has given more validity than ever to our plans and proposals.

During the war itself, we experienced the general weakness of our class in everything we have tried to organise or to encourage. While it was important to take up and circulate different information, while deserters and fugitives, in different places, had to be backed up, or also, in order to assume on a larger level some direct action of propaganda and agitation against the war, we were objectively very isolated, mainly here in Western Europe, since we already mentioned how defeatism in Iraq did allow for more centralised action.

As there do not exist any larger class organs to participate in in order to promote and reinforce revolutionary defeatism, as there do not exist any forms of coordination of proletarian action against the war, we had to limit ourselves, here in Europe, to the organisation of some action of propaganda, and this is how, with our own forces as well as with some of our close contacts, we circulated leaflets and reviews, and we produced and put up posters. For us, communist militants, it is a real tragedy that our class was led to

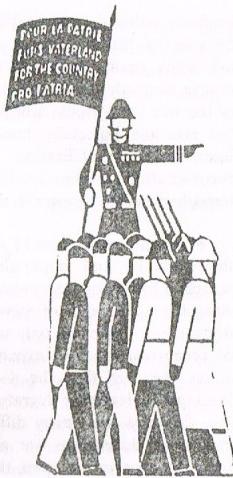
die and to kill, without putting up any massive or significant resistance; it is a real tragedy that - in the hour of truth - when it was necessary to prevent the departure of troops and assume massive and violent action against the enemy "in our own country", we found ourselves to be alone, we, the comrades of the ICG together with some other militants and close sympathizers, and with a balance of forces that was completely paralysing.

Denying this sad reality, denying the impressive force of counter-revolution today, comes down to being its accomplice!

From our point of view, this terrible reality does not discourage us. It confirms the invariant road we are following, the struggle of always, against the stream and far away from all popularity.

Today capitalism is stronger than ever. Nevertheless, it has not been able to avoid depression, crisis, and neither will it be able to avoid complete bankruptcy tomorrow, nor a new merciless commercial war that will finish in a new war altogether. Capital has bypassed partially one imperialist contradiction, but it continues to exacerbate the whole of the general contradictions of its system. Sooner or later, the contradiction WAR or REVOLUTION will polarize once more the entire world. Everything that is being done to diminish or postpone the contradictions, in fact only delays the moment when these contradictions will explode, when they will again come to the forefront of the international scene, but with much more power still!

Sooner or later also, with this new and inevitable explosion, the proletariat that has been so absent as an international autonomous class during the ultimate convulsions, will again stand at the centre of the historical scene, and again the contradictions of capitalist society will fuse in the contradiction between war and revolution, between capitalism and communism.



REVOLUTIONARY DEFEATISM IN IRAQ

In the last chapter, we wrote that as long as comrades in Iraq can manage to get information to us, we intend to continue to centralize information from the region. Since then, we received new information directly from comrades and proletarians, some of them writing from the front line of action. They want to make it understood, as soon as possible, what situation they have been faced with. The new details confirm and reinforce our previous conclusions: proletarian revolutionary defeatism and autonomous struggle against all capitalist factions, including nationalist and Islamic factions, was extremely significant.

We have attempted to put the main points down in this chapter. We apologize for the relatively disorganized and sometimes hasty presentation - bear in mind that some of this information was obtained by very indirect means, by communication with comrades and proletarians, some of them in the midst of armed confrontation with the State.

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We have already mentioned that significant proletarian struggles against the State had already broken out before the start of the war: food riots, anti-war demos, etc... we have now got further information on the situation and the state of mind of soldiers and proletarians in general, before the allied bombing began.

As a result of the Iran/Iraq war, it is difficult for the State to control the area, particularly the cities. Ten years of war have literally armed the majority of proletarians. The marshlands, for example, have become an area of convergence for deserters and other proletarians. Soldiers who have been fighting for ten years will no longer put up with a system now demanding taxes or a boss or foreman giving orders. Moreover, in glorifying soldiers returning from the battle front (indispensable war propaganda), the State indirectly encouraged insubordination and resistance to its control over daily life. It responded in a confused manner to try to maintain social peace, but was unable to halt disobedience and generalized disorganisation.

In Baghdad itself, before the bombings, everyone was preparing to flee the city and there was a flourishing trade in forged laissez-passer documents, organisation of hide-outs, etc. Everyone had organised their desertion well in advance of the first bomb dropping on the city: privates, but also some officers

who had ripped off their stripes and were sometimes the first to leave. The biggest barracks in Baghdad began to empty as the first shells fell and not a single shot was heard in defence of the barracks. There were desertions and officers were executed. Soldiers and other proletarians made up a corps of shock troopers fighting the Baathist forces. During the war, they managed to gain control of two areas of the city: Al Sourah and Al Shou'ela. Within Baghdad, these areas became magnets for further deserters. Hundreds of soldiers from all over the country escaped from the main barracks in Baghdad and went to such supportive districts, whose inhabitants enabled them to return to their homes, by providing them with rest, food and civilian clothes.

As the threat of a new war became more and more real, resistance to it took on various forms - from passive reaction to violent and armed action against army recruiters. A decisive role was again played by the core of armed proletarians, who responded so significantly to the Iran/Iraq war. Before and during the war, they directed resistance against the military at various levels and were now able to transform initial passive resistance (refusal to sign up, to accept superiors' orders, to go to the front - often supported by the family and friends) into conscious military confrontation with recruiters and others supporting the army.

As always, executions of a few officers carried out by the most resolute minority were initially not openly supported by proletarian conscripts. Although they sympathized with this kind of action, state campaigns against defeatism were still maintaining state terrorism. However, they gradually overcame their fear and executions of officers reached massive scales. Soldiers carried out mass lynching of "their own officers" and it got to a stage where the hierarchy required for cohesion of the army no longer existed. Officers were terrified and lost the balance of power. Soldiers did whatever they wanted and the officers were reduced to apologizing and asking forgiveness. They tried to pretend that they were also against the war and had nothing to do with re-mobilization.

The situation within the army became so chaotic that when the Allied military offensive began, officers ripped the stripes off their uniforms for fear of being recognized and executed on the spot by the masses of deserters. To be seen wearing stripes meant suicide.

At various strategic points in the South defeatist units went even further - attacking official party headquarters, occupying food warehouses and distributing the food to starving proletarians. They destroyed the secret police headquarters, killing hundreds of policemen. Uprising developed in Basra, Nasriyah and Diwaniyah. Historically, deserters and other proletarians in hiding from the State are concentrated in this area. In previous issues we wrote about military offensive carried out by the Iraqi State on the marshlands a year after the Iran/Iraq war, which resulted in the death of thousands. At that time government figures estimated 10,000 deserters hiding in the area. Now they talk of 1 million, 55,000 of which are armed deserters.

In this part of Iraq, uprisings started as the Allies' land offensive began. The proletarians' situation became increasingly unbearable due to massive bombings of Basra, Ammarah, Nasriyah, Najaf and Karbala. Organised minorities centralized their activities and struggles took place around all these cities. Contrary to everything that has been said about the religious nature of the movement, religion played no part in the proletarians' struggle. Najaf and Karbala are sacred cities for shiites but the uprising had nothing to do with islam, despite what the bourgeois press try to make us believe. Proletarians used sacred sites to hang Baathists. Mausoleums were riddled with bullets and angry proletarians pissed in the mosques. Difficult, therefore, to talk of "religious fanaticism"!

The Allies had reached the gates of Najaf and Karbala at the time of the uprisings there. It is clear that they halted the land offensive to permit the Iraqi Army to carry out an attack on the insurgents.

As the Iraqi Army descended on the cities, chaos ensued and deserters fled in all directions. Some asked for asylum and aid from the Allied troops but were told "we'll give you something to drink if you're thirsty, but only in exchange for your weapons." They were then sent back, unarmed, to the city to be massacred - one example of collaboration between Saddam and the Allies against the uprising.

We have already described how Saddam recalled his troops posted in the North when large units of armed proletarians from the South began to advance towards Baghdad, thus increasing the disorganisation of the State in Kurdistan.

Thousands of militants from various regions converged in the North - Turks from Kirkuk, Iranians who had fled the war and repression at the time in Iran, etc... As cities such as Halabja and Qal'at Dizah had been decimated by Saddam a few years before, they

took refuge around Suleimaniya (there were more than 70,000 proletarians organizing themselves into radical groups for self-defence, struggle against state control, against Kurdish or other nationalists). This mixture of proletarians, with varying horizons and experiences, produced a situation in which Kurdish nationalist held very little sway, their usual slogans "Freedom for the Kurdish people" and "Rights for the Kurds" having little effect on the march uprising in Suleimaniya.

In order to counter the large scale uprisings in cities such as Arbil, Kirkuk, Mosul and Suleimaniya... that started with the launching of the land offensive, Saddam signed an agreement for peaceful coexistence with the nationalists. Yalal Talabani; leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and Massoud Barsani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), announced publicly in April and May 1991 that they had reached an agreement with Saddam Hussein. Even more recently, Talabani confirmed that during the war his organisation deliberately avoided taking any action liable to destabilize the State "out of national respect", guaranteeing a mutual respect for territory under the violent monopoly of whichever force. We now know that the "People's Mujahedin" of Iran also took part in these agreements and that their shock troops were used against the proletarian uprising.

In the North, proletarian struggle was outside of and opposed to the official nationalist opposition parties, such as KDP and PUK, from the outset. The internationalist and defeatist proletarian vanguard denounced them as participating in the war.

We now have further information on the context and conditions in which confrontations with the State took place, particularly during the March uprising in Suleimaniya. Before coming on to this, we would like to mention further news we have about a women's demo in Suleimaniya during which 300 women were arrested and later killed. The demo turned violent when a militant woman from Iran tried to take a soldier's gun off him and was shot dead by another soldier on a watchtower. This militant has now become a symbol of proletarian struggle against war and State, a recognized martyr reflecting the image of struggle in Suleimaniya. It is of no consequence to proletarians from Iraq that she was from Iran - what counts is what she did. We have not told this story as an anecdote, but because it expresses the anti-nationalist content of the movement, rising out of a struggle in which proletarians no longer walk in the gutter bourgeois ideology digs to make proletarians confront each other as Iraqis, Iranians, Kurds, shiites...

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Despite the media's insistence on the entirely spontaneous nature of the uprising in Suleimaniya, it is now clear that it was the result of intense organisation undertaken by vanguard minorities. Their militant activity was intense in the six months before the uprising. A group called Communist Perspective was formed and their publication, "The Proletarian", was distributed mainly amongst militants. Links between militants had been severely limited over the years due to repression and the memory of recent massacres. Militants organised themselves in secret. When riots broke out during the occupation of Kuwait, comrades from Communist Perspective organized debates with other militant minorities. In the course of analyzing the situation and "what should be done", the Shura ("Shura" means "workers' council" in Persian and Kurdish) movement was born. Initially there were about 300 militants (from both Iran and Iraq) who decided to organize themselves, homogenize their positions, deal with technical and medical problems, commandeer weapons...

In Suleimaniya, they decided to attack on the 8th of March at 13h00. Groups were formed and given specific targets - barracks, police stations, secret police and information headquarters, the "United Nations Hotel" (a hotel used by the United Nations, but which turned out to be a secret police base), main entrances to the city and surrounding areas to prevent nationalists and journalists from entering.... All proletarians were delighted with this course of action - tensions had been running for a while and everyone was expecting something to happen. The army could sense the growing hatred and tension and was forecasting that something would blow. Nevertheless, the offensive on Suleimaniya took them by surprise - the city was attacked from all sides simultaneously.

Our comrades have given us specific examples of how the groups of internationalist insurgents were themselves overtaken by proletarian mass action, driven by their class interests and hatred. This occurs in any insurrectional process and is illustrated by events as a few hundred armed revolutionaries advanced into Suleimaniya and were greeted by the masses of proletarians, all carrying weapons. The proletarians' sole objective was to violently impose their own interests on their oppressors and, in order to do so, much to the surprise of the revolutionary insurgents, they had managed to arm themselves not only with light hand guns, but also heavy artillery, and were preparing to use them against the State.

In the course of the attack of the city, more and more proletarians joined the fighting. When the barracks were taken over, arms were distributed to proletarians prepared to fight. They were given orders

to attack milk stores (milk had been rationed), prisons and to release prisoners. Anyone in military uniform was massacred on the spot.

The uprising was particularly violent, proletarians taking revenge for the years of massacre and organized state terrorism. They attacked Saddam's secret police force.

After two days of fighting the hide-out of political police fell into the hands of the insurgents. Fighting was very violent as the highly trained soldiers defended the building. Victory was won as increasing numbers of proletarians joined the battle and hundreds of Baathist police hiding in the building were killed.

The occupation of Suleimaniya got underway starting with the reappropriation of machines, secret documents and weapons and this explains the comments of some nationalist leaders reported in western newspapers:

"Disorder benefits none, there are undoubtedly agitators amongst those sowing the seeds of disorder... they are destroying everything, not only attacking and killing members of Saddam's secret police which is understandable but they are also burning all police files and registers of property and civil status... It is clear to us that agitators, Baathists are responsible, because, as you imagine, we will need all this later - every state organisation needs these documents!"

What these bourgeois fail to understand or better put, arose not to admit, is that the aim of the revolt was not to reorganise the state and capital's administration, or to liberate the nation, but like every significant proletarian insurrection, the struggle is against the State itself and aims to attack all of its manifestations - military, police, public buildings, parties and security and property documents.

On hearing that the Baathists had hidden in a park outside the town, proletarians descended on it shouting:

"Long live Shura, abolish the State!"
"We want soviets!"

Slogans supporting "Kurdish autonomy" are practically non-existent. Proletarians organised into militia to prevent Peshmergas (fighters of nationalist organisations) from entering Suleimaniya. It is clear to all the insurgents that the nationalists are working hand in hand with Saddam.

The nationalists went on to Kirkuk to take control of the city. They arrived first, but were closely followed by militants from the Shura, armed to the teeth. In Kirkuk the PUK and KDP are in the majority and with the balance of power in their favour, they fought against the government and the Shura.

The agreement between Saddam and the nationalists to quell the rebellion, includes a proviso that "Arabs" (deserters from the South who took part in the uprisings in the North) be returned to "their own" area.

After the uprisings "Free Kurdish Radio" made daily broadcasts threatening those in possession of arms or Shura leaflets with execution.

A rift developed between Communist Perspective and the Shura, due to disagreements on positions. However we do not have any details of this. The split demobilized and distanced many proletarian sympathizers, although solidarity was maintained between the groups in the face of nationalist repression.

Briefly, the Shura can be described as an internationalist proletarian organisation, opposed to Kurdish or other nationalists. It fights to strengthen the revolutionary movement, not only in Iraq, but throughout the world. It defines capital as a worldwide social relationship which can therefore only be abolished worldwide by a world revolution (9).

After the uprising the movement died down a bit and the Shura went underground again to escape massacre.

The army and the nationalists retook Suleimaniya in mid-April. The alliance between the government and the nationalists was perfect - the nationalists denounce the militants of Shura and give the State all information they have: names, addresses, activities, ...

On the 30th and 31st of May there were more riots in Suleimaniya. Looting was organised and many soldiers gave up their arms out of fear of being

massacred. Government and nationalist forces called for reinforcements. Despite their hatred of nationalists, the proletarians did not kill them and the PUK imposed a curfew by shooting at anyone out on the streets after 7pm. In this way, the PUK remained in control of the situation.

Significant proletarian uprisings also took place in Raniyah, Kirkuk and Arbil. Deserters and armed minority groups played an important part. These minorities described their position as being against all bourgeois factions (governmental and nationalist) and were concentrated and trained in the area of Karadakh.

Confrontation between nationalists and internationalists was open. Internationalist comrades know that defeat is synonymous with massacre and that nationalist militias act without mercy.

After the uprisings "Free Kurdish Radio" made daily broadcasts threatening those in possession of arms or Shura leaflets with execution.

It is an absolute lie that the Allies only bombed military targets and "collateral" civilian targets during the Gulf war. There are two possibilities: either their lies about the Allies' force and technological strength were even greater than we had thought and wrote about in the previous chapter of this text, or military installations were not the targets of the bombings in the first place. We now know, thanks to internationalist comrades in Iraq, that 80% of the bombings were carried out on civilian targets. We also know that Iraqi military installations are practically intact, and that chemical weapons and nuclear research centres were left untouched. Baghdad still has the same capacity for producing chemical weapons and building nuclear warheads as before the war.

As for the bloody battles in which Allied "heroes" and soldiers of the Republican Guard were engaged, only 5% of the Republican Guard were killed in the war. Proletarian struggle took a far greater toll on the state cracktroops than the whole of the Allied offensive.

Proletarian struggle was much more of a preoccupation and determining factor to the Allies than their conflicts with "damned Saddam". Today (July 1991), the Republican Guards still play essential role in the region. There is no doubt that, over and above their desire to liquidate Saddam, the Pentagon and the most powerful forces of

international capitalism in general, consider the Baath party to be a good guarantor for order in the region (this not excluding alliances with nationalist and religious factions - on the contrary). It is clear that the decision not to attack critical sectors of the Republican Guard and to stop the war were motivated by the absolute necessity for a local force capable of guaranteeing social peace. This was illustrated by pictures broadcast by the media, which they themselves considered surreal, showing North American marines protecting soldiers and the Republican Guard from proletarian anger and subversion.

In the same way, fundamentally, humanitarian missions are concentrated efforts to disarm the proletariat. In the camps the U.N. works with the nationalists and nothing is done without their agreement. Food is only given to those who surrender their guns! Nationalists make constant radio appeals in a sometimes threatening, sometimes reassuring tone of voice, calling for wanted militants to give themselves up. They read out their names, say they know where they are hiding and promise them an amnesty and food in exchange for their weapons... "Humanitarian" aid is thus sold to those ready to accept State discipline and submission to order... The Allied forces repay them with a bit of bread and medical attention.

Neither the government, the nationalists, nor the Allied forces managed to control the situation. This is why they had to form an alliance. The government sent several patrols out in every northern city and gave them orders to find proletarians from the South and send them back. But the situation was so tense that soldiers threw down their weapons and expressed their solidarity with the proletarians every time one of them refused to show his identity card.

Out of ignorance - or as a deliberate policy of disinformation - the proletarian rebellion in the North has become identified with Kurdish nationalism and that in the South with Iranian State Islam.

Without underestimating the repressive ideological strength of nationalists and religious forces, we must stress that all struggles described in this article were organised apart from and against them. They never call for struggle against the State and actually constitute some of the state's most reliable defenders.

20th April 1991



(9) This is a description of what Al Shura was initially. However, a widespread "Shura movement" developed with about 54 shuras (workers' councils) in Suleimaniya, some pro-C.P., some marxist-leninist and some along the lines of the original Al Shura and Communist Perspective.

A comrades' testimony:

A JOURNEY TO IRAK

On August 1st 1991 there was a loud bang during the night in Tehran and we heard that a foodstorage warehouse had been blown up in protest at delay in distribution of welfare food allowances. People had been waiting two months for their social security food supplies. Apparently, nighttime explosions are quite common, public buses being the most frequent targets.

Tehran has 11 million inhabitants and the traffic and activity in the city at night is busier than most European cities during the day. Nearly every Iranian we met asked incredulously "why did you come here?", saying they hate the system and describing how hard life is in Iran. However, it was difficult to find any written expression of the class struggle. Comrades living there confirmed that this is the case and explained that there are Pasdaran specially employed to whitewash anti-government and anti-religious graffiti. We were unable to find any political leaflets or publications either.

The Pasdaran's most visible concern was with the Islamic dress code for women. Any man in Iran, whether an official Pasdaran or not, can make himself a self-appointed guardian of Islamic moral values and can reproach any woman he considers to be flaunting too much of herself. They are on the street, in the shops, in hotels... always watching to see whose scarf has slipped too far back or who is not wearing the mandatory socks or tights under her overcoat. Women "unsuitably dressed" are barred from offices, museums, will not be served in shops or restaurants.

The only advantage for women in this male-female apartheid is that they rarely get asked for their identity cards and rarely get searched. The examples given here actually represent a major relaxation in the dress code. Previously, women were stoned for showing a strand of hair and black chadors were obligatory. Now people have gradually pushed back the limits imposed on them and wear 'Western' clothes covered by European-style raincoats instead of a chador. They can show their fringe under the headscarf and men are now allowed to wear short-sleeved shirts. This change is also reflected in the distinct decrease in public Islamic fervour. Up until 1987 Friday prayers were held in a major, very long and wide street called Revolution street. Thousands and thousands of people would go and the street was closed to traffic. We went back there one Friday, to find a Mullah preaching himself hoarse to only eight

people, whilst cars and buses drove up and down. The government knows it can only reverse this trend at its peril.

The atmosphere in Tehran is very tense. Many people have told us that "Iran is pregnant with revolution" and this is certainly the way it feels. People are impatient, tempers easily frayed and they smile and laugh only rarely. Homelessness, unemployment, food prices, the number of drug-addicts and, very visibly, the anger of proletarians are on an upward spiral. Almost everybody we spoke to told us "Life is very difficult here... Everything is expensive... Our revolution wasn't to bring these bastards to power...". As one taxi driver said: "Sometimes I am forced to take on so many jobs that I don't see my wife and children for a whole week and this is certainly the case for most of my colleagues."

In July 1991 there was a demonstration in which people demanded more food. They used a slogan "We have become beggars, the Mullahs millionaires". The demo spread over Tehran, Asfahan and Hamadan. Seven women were killed in Tehran when they discarded their headscarves. Further demos occurred on 18.8.91 and spread over Tuysarkan, Hamadan, Zinjan, Tehran and Asfahan. The same slogan was used and there were clashes resulting in 2000 arrests and 5 deaths in Zinjan, 5 arrests in Asfahan and a further 50 deaths in Hamadan. In Tehran a demonstrator set fire to the City Hall and killed the Mayor.

As a result of increasing class struggle and, the government has become roughly divided into two main factions - something totally contrary to the philosophy of the supposedly united 'Party of God'. Rafsanjani realizes that liberalization and increased tolerance is necessary to avert another revolution. Khomeini and his followers still favour the hardline approach.

After spending days enquiring about the relative safety of various routes, we went to Sulaimania.

The border between Iran and Irak is not marked, with often only a single Pasdar sitting at an apparently arbitrary place. He is not so much interested in preventing people crossing or scrutinizing travel documents as he is in assessing their 'bribing potential', searching for hidden dollars and goods obviously intended for sale in Iraq. He then frightens smugglers into bribing him to

let them pass. This is a further example of the changing social climate, whereby previous 'guardians of Islamic morals', prepared to kill anyone threatening to corrupt the muslim State, are now more interested in personal financial gain. We were not bodysearched, fortunately as we had leaflets hidden in our underpants and dollars in our shoes.

The first town we entered, Nizarah, is a devastated area, now full of refugees from Sulaimania, Kirkuk and Arbil provinces. There are several Red Cross and U.N. camps but people overflow in their thousands to the mountainsides. Their only shelter are lean-to's that they have built out of branches and leaves.

Between the border and Nizarah, there are two checkpoints manned by Peshmerga from the Kurdish Front. They levy taxes on smuggled goods and search for Arabs travelling in the area, most of whom are deserters and anti-government militants. In their attempts to keep "Arab" and "Kurdish" communist militants divided, the Peshmerga want to force Arabs out of Kurdistan (except those they can make use of). It is dangerous for Arabs travelling around Kurdistan and to gain any degree of protection they have to be able to prove that they are Peshmerga for the Kurdish Front (KF). The only Party in the Front that will accept them is the Iraqi CP. Any Arab found by Nationalist Peshmerga without Kurdish Front documents is taken prisoner and then handed over to the Iraqi authorities, most likely to be shot. However, despite the risks involved, some Arab comrades working with the Shuras do manage to travel to and from Kurdistan, holding meetings with Kurdish comrades and taking information back to militants in Baghdad.

When Talabani was in Iran one day in his car he passed many of the refugees fleeing into Iran. At first, nobody realised it was him, but when he stopped near one old woman she recognized him, bent down, scooped up a handful of the mud she was walking barefoot in and asked him to lean out of the car window so that she might throw the mud in his face. He remained composed. "Of course", he replied. "I will do whatever the Mothers of Kurdistan request of me." The woman dropped the mud and cried limply "What have we done to deserve this? Why are you doing this to us?"

Since government-Kurdish Front negotiations, the checkpoints around Sulaimania are manned by Iraqi soldiers and Peshmerga of the Kurdish Front (mainly KDP and PUK) working together. The soldiers sent to man checkpoints and to go on patrols in the Sulaimania

district are young conscripts and are terrified of the Kurdish Front. Firstly, they realize that a breakdown in negotiations may result in them all being killed in new fighting. Secondly, they know that if they try to desert, the Kurdish Front will round them up and send them back to their army units - to a certain death. Thirdly, and most importantly, the lack of a centralized and well organized proletarian group in Kurdistan means that there are very few places to which the soldiers can turn for solidarity and mutual support.

At the end of July there was further fighting and Kirkuk came back under the control of the Shuras and other insurgents. Militants found government documents marked 'Confidential-Top Secret, June 1991' (when KF-Baathist negotiations were still in progress) in one of the secret police stations. These give orders to shoot "trouble makers from Shuras, Iraqi Communist Party and Islamic organisations, and to kill, on the spot, any soldier who appears to have deserted or who cannot account for his gun...".

On arrival in Sulaimania, we went straight to see some Shura contacts. We were waiting for a comrade, who was to take us to one of the Shura bases. Suddenly, he rushed into the house, grabbed his gun, cocked it, acknowledged our presence with hurried "Hi" and rushed out. We all followed, thinking that fighting had started up again. Out on the street we saw a man pointing a rifle at a group of women crouched on the ground. The comrade ran up behind him and shouted "Drop it or I'll shoot". People started running out of their houses, armed with pistols and surrounded the man. He was forced to give up his rifle but in the scuffle a few shots were fired and overheard by Kurdish Front Peshmerga out on patrol of the city.

They got out of their jeep and asked A to show them his licence for the rifle (1). Our comrade replied with derision, "You can wait all year and I wouldn't even show you a licence for a bullet". He turned to the crowd and said: "The Kurdish Front want to take our rifles off us and hand them back to the Baathists, just as they returned our commandeered tanks to them." The Peshmerga were livid but they could sense the animosity of the crowd. After a short discussion amongst themselves, they climbed back into the jeep and drove off. Our comrade then took us to see one of the Shuras. They told us that we had arrived at a bad time and that the length of our stay would be determined by the danger of the ever changing situation in Sulaimania. They had heard that 250,000 soldiers were going to advance on Sulaimania and so it was vital for them to constantly keep up to date with events. They

(1) A requirement for weapon licences had recently been instituted by the KF and meant giving one's name and the rifle serial number - clearly a significant risk for militants, who had had previous experience of this policy in 1973-1976. During this period the ICP had joined forces with the Baathists in their fight against the PUK and KDP. The ICP members were in the majority and were armed and given licences for their weapons. When the ICP/Baathist compromise broke down the Baathists used licence registers to identify and subsequently massacre hundreds of communist militants, many of whom had left the ICP by this stage anyway.

warned us that long discussions may not be possible, as they would have to leave to assess the situation at regular intervals, especially during the day.

There were 56 Shuras in the beginning, each one set up largely according to district. Existing Shuras would call for people to set up further ones in their own areas. However, many of them had widely conflicting viewpoints and so people would tend to join the Shura most closely representing their own ideas.

All leaflets and publications produced by the Shuras and other organisations have, to a greater or lesser extent, democratic tendencies. The movement, as far as "practical activities" are concerned, has been overwhelmingly anti-democratic. However, this dictatorship of the proletariat has gone largely unmentioned, even in publications written by comrades who were amongst the most radically active during the uprising. For example, when secret policemen were taken prisoner by the Shuras the organisers of one Shura consulted the PUK on how they should deal with them, as some members wanted to put them on trial, and convict them accordingly. While they were deciding how best to organize this, radical Shura members took matters into their own hands, breaking into the building and killing all the secret policemen themselves.

During the uprising insurgents had taken control of all government buildings except for the main secret police station. The secret police were shelling the city at random, killing many people, but it was clear that they could not defend the headquarters for much longer. A major mistake was made by the Shuras, mainly due to lack of centralization of information. The pro-nationalist Shuras sent for the Nationalist peshmerga who were in the mountains near Sulaimania, asking for their help in toppling the last Baathist stronghold. These Shuras hailed the Peshmerga as heroes who had saved the day. But the proletarian Shuras, for example Communist Perspective Organisation, had been unaware of plans to involve the Nationalists and were furious.

There is still a major problem with lack of centralization of activities and information today. Some members of proletarian Shuras, who had not heard about very strong anti-nationalist activities had been carried out by other Shuras and had therefore not been able to coordinate with them. In some parts of the city Shuras were welcoming Nationalist Peshmerga as "our brothers", whilst in other areas Shura people shouted "Down with the Baath regime, Nationalism and the Kurdish bourgeoisie!"

However, the movement was generally "spontaneous" and pro-working class, with slogans about the poor and exploited of Iraq, etc. Nationalism was initially very weak. The things that enabled the Nationalists to hijack the movement were :

1. The Shuras did not have a clear political direction.

For example, instead of writing 'working class' or 'proletariat' in their leaflets and slogans they used terms such as 'the people' of Kurdistan, etc. They did not understand that 'People power'- as opposed to 'Proletarian power'- is the rule of the people as citizens participating in capitalist society. It thus signifies the rule of money and profit, contributing to the health of Capital.

2. The Shuras did not have organized and centralized strategies during the uprising and did not take enough precautions against the Nationalists. For example, it did not occur to them to take over the banks and it was only when the Nationalist Peshmergas did so that they realized their mistake. As a result of occupying the banks, the peshmerga strengthened their position enormously, having the means to buy and distribute food and other goods, thus increasing people's dependence on them.

3. All Shuras and organisations had a democratic tendency. Even proletarian Shuras were demanding the right to freedom of expression, demonstrations, publications, etc. It can be seen in all their activities that they did not have a practical grasp of the State as a social relationship, attacking concrete manifestations of the State in the form of Baathist offices, etc., but neglecting to target anti-communist movements, such as Nationalism, as well. This represented counter-revolution within the Shura movement itself.

4. The western media and western Aid agencies built up the Nationalist movement with propaganda and practical help. The Nationalists were able to use the local media to denounce the Shuras as 'immature trouble-makers and looters'.

A dangerous consequence of the militants' open participation in the uprising is that most of them are now well-known as communist militants and, in their present defeat, are at great risk. We reminded them of the massacre of the militants of Sanandaj in Iran 1980. We warned them to be very much on the defensive, if offensive action against Kurdish Front bases is no longer possible. Because of the geography of the Sulaimania province, winter makes it practically impossible to flee from attack. The only way to flee Sulaimania is into the mountains, and the city itself is surrounded by a 60m-wide ringroad. This was built as a military strategy for greater control of the city, in response to mass desertion and strong militancy in the region.

During discussions two main areas in which comrades in Europe could of help were highlighted:

1. Financial - They are planning to send some comrades to live abroad, within easy access of Iraq, but where they would be able to form a point of contact. we were very happy to hear this and agreed that we

need to support such moves towards centralizing and developing communist activity.

2. Written material - they said that the political climate in Iraq is such that the demand for proletarian publications is very high. They clearly have a lot of practical obstacles in their way with regards to writing leaflets, etc., and want us to send them leaflets so that they can photocopy and distribute them. They also asked for books documenting proletarian history that still remain banned in Iran and Iraq. Their working class-orientated reading matter being restricted to Marx and Engels.

We told them that the reason we came was (besides giving financial help and obtaining information) to make a step towards centralizing our activities, to build a basis for continued contact, to develop communist activity through shared experiences and to give direction to the movement. They agreed with all of these points. In discussions, the Shuras members and us agreed on most main points. However, on the whole, they had not thought out clear political principles and our discussions were largely one-sided, with us talking and them listening. They often contradicted themselves which made things quite confusing. They explained how it had been practically impossible to be actively organized for years, up until 6 months before the invasion. They had had to deliberately avoid meeting up with comrades for discussion to prevent the secret police from knowing he had contact with them. Any gathering of more than 3 people was highly suspect in the eyes of the police. Possession of a pot of 'TIPEX' was subversive, let alone a typewriter - punishable by hanging if you had no licence for it. Even secretaries had to hand in their typewriters to a private police office every day after work... It was therefore logically very difficult to produce leaflets, etc. However, 6 months before the invasion, the state appeared to lose its grip and it became comparatively easy to contact comrades, etc. Discussions were then about practical issues of how to arm themselves, how to organize physical attacks and later developed into how to set up the Shuras. Clearly, they have not had much chance to develop opinions on "political theory".

This is one of the reasons why they are so desperate for written material. They kept interrupting, asking us to send them communist literature on our return. "Before the war, which was obviously planned to crush and manipulate the expected uprising, the working class was beginning to start and lead activities to destabilize the State. Events, particularly because of the war, are developing at a much faster pace than the proletariat is prepared for", said a comrade.



THE MAIN DISCUSSIONS

Here, in summary, are the main points of discussion.

1. Since the existence of capitalism the world has consisted of two opposing classes and, despite competition amongst themselves, all states are united in a common interest - exploitation of the proletariat.

2. Communism cannot be built in one country. The Iraqi state cannot be abolished by armed uprising confined to Iraq. Uprisings like the one in Iraq are products of the historical experience of the working class, revolution being a continuous - and not isolated - process.

3. We do not advocate guerrilla warfare alone as a means of bringing about communist revolution. However, we are under direct armed attack by capitalist forces and on occasion our class needs to retaliate and, if possible, to go on the offensive. Obviously sometimes it is against the interests of the struggle to take up arms and expose ourselves further to capitalist attack. We are an historical class fighting the capitalist class in the form of a social movement, not as one machine against the other.

4. Nationalism is a capitalist policy to crush the communist movement, its aim being to hide the true nature of the class struggle. Neither workers nor capitalists are nationalist, they both belong to international opposing classes. 'Nationalist' workers have been brainwashed.

We disagreed that nationalism is a planned capitalist policy. The nation exists as a result of the capitalist mode of production. Nation and Nationalism, the differentiation made between Black and White, Men and Women, Arab and Kurd..., etc., reflect the needs of capitalist society and are not cynical policies. Patriotism is a real characteristic of the bourgeoisie. In this regard, international capitalists seem to be opposing each other, but this only constitutes the competition they need. It is their nationalism which unites them as an international class against the proletariat. Nationalism is not something imposed forcibly by the state on society. It is an integral part of the capitalist social relationship and is not confined to the ruling class. Millions of workers have died and are still dying in defence of the Nation. We cannot say that they have been brainwashed and are sacrificing themselves out of a robotic subjugation to the state. Their sincere patriotism results from the capitalist social relationship and class contradictions.

They contradicted themselves many times, but still insisted that nationalism is a planned capitalist policy rather than a movement evident in human beings subjected to capitalist social relationships.

5. A large proportion of our time was taken up with stories of events in Sulaimania, one was taken up with stories of events in Kirkuk.

6. Party and Class.

Party: All communist struggle and activity aiming to destroy the capitalist way of life since its emergence represents activity by the party of the proletariat... so that your participation in the uprising, our journeys,... represent, whether we like it or not, activity by the party, albeit only very weakly centralized. The ICG, for instance, is a centralizing force of existing class struggle. The reason why past revolutions were defeated is not because of the absence of the Party, but rather because of the balance of class power between proletariat and capital....

Class: For us being 'proletarian' is not synonymous with being a 'worker'. The proletariat as an international class is determined by its struggle against capitalist society and has a deep meaning which cannot be defined sociologically on the basis of income, degree of exploitation, etc. In short, the communist movement consists of the anti-capitalist activity of the proletariat.... They agreed that, although an international class, globally the proletariat is very weak and does not centralize itself internationally as a 'class' and a 'party'.... We discussed how the power of the proletariat in any one country is dependent on the power of the proletariat throughout the world. The same interdependence is true for capitalism - if Bush catches a cold, Saddam sneezes.

7. We had a discussion about Marxism and Marx. A comrade said that he considered Marx's work to be a product of class struggle and Marx to be a fallible militant. We all agreed that capitalism had portrayed Marx's work as the be-all and end-all of communist theory, the pinnacle of communist development, and Marx as the God of the working class. Communism is a dialectical and social movement and did not start from, nor does it stop at, Marx. It is a movement that digs a grave for idol worship. To illustrate these points, we talked about class struggle before Marx, e.g. the Qaramita and Mazdaq revolutions, and how individuals and organisations existed in Marx's lifetime, who were not members of the 1st International, did not know Marx and yet had very similar programmes to him, e.g., El Producer in Cuba.

8. Peace and War. They totally agreed with the statement used by ICG in our leaflet: "They drag us to work as they drag us to war". They agreed that the existence of capitalism signifies war in itself, and 'peace-time' can never exist for the proletariat. However, they criticized us for saying: "Neither peace nor war", which we explained that was a reaction to the very strong peace movement in Europe, which sees war only as military conflict, not as illnesses, accidents, isolation, work, etc.

9. We strongly criticized and rejected the contents of their publications (and some comrades totally agreed). They by no means reflect the nature of the movement in Iraq, nor even the eyewitness accounts they related

to us. They tried to justify the weaknesses of their articles by explaining that they wanted to write them in a language that people would understand and that the situation appeared to demand. Our reply was that we wouldn't be surprised to hear such excuses in western Europe, where "social peace" reigns and 'getting the communist message across to the masses' has assumed a disproportionate degree of importance. However, to hear this in Iraq, where the issue of the class struggle forms part of everyday conversation, was disappointing.... The bourgeoisie does not only try to crush us by the use of prisons, massacres, torture, isolation... but also makes us feel we have to modify the language of communism, so that 'people will understand'. However, the result is to distort our history and our positions. We pointed out all the leaflets in which they had made demands for "the right for free political discussion, the right to hold political meetings". Some comrades told us that it is impossible to find an ideologically sound, or in the communist point of view, a good leaflet produced in Sulaimania.

We asked them where and when they have seen a State grant communists "the right to destroy all states!!", which can be the only historical programme of our movement. In many places they have written 'people' instead of 'proletariat', which is not a mere a word but reflects ideology and we pointed out the danger of this. They explained that as far as they are concerned, 'people' means proletariat and that the bourgeoisie are not 'people'!. The most striking thing is the contradiction between what they say and what they do. In practice they are against democracy, the nation, free rights... As we mentioned earlier, the past political climate prohibited them from reading communist literature, active discussion etc. Another reason was that they underestimated the movement, thinking that the 'people' would never understand concepts such as the 'proletariat'.

LEADING UP TO THE INVASION OF KUWAIT

* About 8 months prior to the invasion of Kuwait, the government announced that those entitled to welfare benefits would be allocated 250g oil, 250g sugar, 500g rice, 1 bar of soap and 5kg of flour per month per person. Before, the daily wages of government employees (teachers, bank employees, etc.) were enough to buy 2 kg of rice and the daily wage of the average worker was enough to buy 14 pieces of bread. Before the Iran/Iraq war, monthly social security food tokens had provided far greater amounts than this per person. Benefits had stopped during the war and this recommencement, albeit at a much lower level, was desperately needed. However, tokens were only distributed for 2 months and now people do not receive any

of their allowance. People, desperate for food, started selling their TV, Fridge, Radio, etc. 80kg of flour used to cost only 6 Dinars, but rose to 400 D. in the North and 800 D. in the South. Most of the rotten, rusty factories that had been closed for years were reopened. The cheapest food, potatoes, became a meal for the rich. 1 Kuwaiti Dinar (1000 Fils) was worth 950 Iraqi Fils in 1980, but in 1991 the Iraqi Dinar had been so devalued that 1 Kuwaiti Dinar was worth 10 Iraqi Dinars.

* Shortly before the invasion the government stopped the conscription of farmers and their sons and announced an amnesty for many prisoners, on the proviso that they return to and start working their land for agricultural production.

* Conscription (from the age of 17 to 45) was reinstated as soon as Kuwait was invaded. However, vast numbers of soldiers deserted, especially in Sulaimania and in the Marshlands. Many of them couldn't desert, because they didn't have any money and had been sent there without their official papers. In general, most people, in the hope of getting rid of the Baath regime, did not want the government to withdraw from Kuwait. (Another sign of the hopelessness and desperation of the movement.)

* At the beginning of February the Clan Army leaders in Kurdistan tried to calm the populace, spreading rumours that a Republican Guard Unit had been set up in Sulaimania. They warned that any popular uprising would result in decimation of the area in which it arose by the Republican Guard.

* On the 5th March 1991 (just before the uprising) there was a meeting between the Clan Army leaders and a Representative of the Baath Party in Sulaimania. The Shuras have got the documents recording the minutes of this meeting, in which the Government gave the clan Armies free rein to kill all those involved in any uprising.

* The night before the uprising, militants (who were to go on to form Shuras) paid a visit to the Jash (clan army soldiers) and asked them to help them by giving them weapons. They were given 2 pistols and a Kalashnikov and they then went on to use these to attack houses belonging to the Jash and disarm them. Some of the Jash immediately and willingly came over to fight on their side.

* One organisation, Communist Perspective Organisation, was set up about 6 months before the uprising. Shortly before the uprising, another one was formed, called 'Uprising Group'. This was based purely on direct action and did not publish any leaflets etc .

Communist Perspective Organisation had developed their political positions and organisation before the uprising. They had coordinated their activities with

other militants and had clear political objectives. Some of them had already been arrested for militant activity before the uprising.

The militants who took weapons from the Jash had been in contact with Communist Perspective Organisation and had asked to work with them in practical anti-State activities. Communist Perspective Organisation wanted, above all, to avoid becoming a popularist organisation only serving to coordinate anti-government attacks, regardless of individual insurgents' political positions. They only wanted to work with proletarians dedicated to the same aim.

* The allied bombing was in progress and the uprising had not yet started in Sulaimania. Deserters came back to Kurdistan from the South and told people that an uprising had started in Kut, Ammarah, Naseryah, Samawah and Hellah.

* On 29.2.91 - deserters reported that Basra had been taken over by insurgents and that army units, complete with weapons and tanks, had come over to their side. There was also an insurrection in the Al-Thawra area of Baghdad. The comrades and people we saw, also assured us that the movement in the south is far from being lead by the Shias. In a rare moment of honesty - and against the best interests of capitalism - the media divulged that :

"All the damage was the result of anarchists and saboteurs... They were anarchists, criminals. They drank whisky inside the shrines, and made love to women..."

(Independent July 1991.)

* On 5th march insurgents took control in Raniyah. Their main slogans called for people to set up Shuras.

* 6.3.91 - City of Chwar Korna joined the uprising.

* 7.3.91 - Militant groups and individuals make preparations to attack government offices and installations in Sulaimania. Some insurgents who were unaware that militants had been planning an uprising for months and that much of the points of attack had already been organized, tried to inspire others to join the rebellion. They did so by spreading a rumour that the police headquarters had been occupied by the Peshmerga, thus inadvertently spreading very useful propaganda for the Nationalists (which was very successful!).

* There were armed insurgents in every area of Sulaimania. Some had been given weapons by Jash sympathizers, others had forced the Jash to hand over weapons if they refused to fight with them. 2-3 hours after the fighting started on 7th, some insurgents 'decided' to form Shuras, which actually came about as a result of communist militant activity, past and present, and the influence of the 1979-80 Shura movement in Iran.

Particular motivating factors to form Shuras were:

1. A need for more organisation and practical direction of the movement by militants, to prevent nationalist peshmerga appropriating the struggle to their own cause. However, at the same time, another group of rebels were, also in the name of Shuras, calling for the peshmerga to return to fight in the uprising. They thought that they could follow the Leninist idea of using the local nationalist bourgeoisie to fight 'the greater evil' of the Iraqi state. Most of these insurgents now work with the Kurdish Front.

2. A need to prevent widespread massive looting. Opportunistic sharks were clearing the city of, for example, hospital beds and electrical equipment and taking them to Iran to sell. As hospitals came under the control of the insurgents and increasing numbers of rebels were wounded, such items became vital to the struggle.

3. They saw a need to organise militant action - Where their main targets should be and how they could best attack them. For example, 48 conscript soldiers were picked up and then hidden by one of the Shuras, to protect them from indiscriminate killing by the Nationalists. They were later released in a safer area. They also aimed to develop their activity and spread it to other parts.

* The same day nearly 30,000 people, some armed and some not, converged on the Shura headquarters at Awat School, where Shura members talked to the crowds through loudspeakers. "These are our headquarters, a base for soviets for the exploited. Set up your workers councils. Make the Shura your base for long-term struggle. Bring looted goods and food here and we will distribute them. Class consciousness is the arm of freedom. Revolutionary people, revolutionary exploited, the achievements of the revolution have cost us our own blood! Keep it going! Don't waste it!"

Shura supporters captured six hundred secret policemen and brought them to the headquarters. Some Shura members went to consult PUK leaders in the mountains regarding the 600 prisoners. Noshirwan, a military commander, said that they should not be killed 'they could be useful later'. The Shura members themselves, wanted to parade the policemen, listing their catalogues of torture in front of the crowds before killing them. However, the crowds were livid at Noshirwan's suggestion and even prevented the Shura from parading the men, pouring into the building and killing them all themselves.

* By the time the city came under control, there were 56 Shuras in existence, including the Refuse Collectors, Cement, Cloth, Cigarette, Sugar factory workers' Shuras.

* Communist Perspective's Shura (CPS), which

included some of their members and many sympathizers, were in close contact with the above 5 workers' Shuras. They held meetings in which they discussed how the workers had taken over the factories, killing Ba'athist managers and employees etc. CPS stressed that factory machines should be protected and not destroyed in the heat of the uprising. They anticipated a time when the uprising would be cut off from any external supplies and would have to support itself for food, clothes, etc.

* 10.3.91 - Shuras were set up in Arbil and took control of the city in 3 hours, there were 42 Shuras.

* 12.3.91 - Shuras' representatives from Sulaimania went to Arbil and held meetings regarding the centralization of work. The Awat Shura told all the other Shuras that a central committee should be formed. This was set up and they started to produce Shura membership cards, to be able to identify those attending their meetings and armed Shura militants. However, there was some conflict and unity broke down as a result of three different view-points:

1. Members of the central committee must be politically pro-working class.
2. The Shuras represent 'the people' and anyone should be allowed to sit on the central committee, not only communist militants.
3. The members should be democratically elected and anyone opposed to the Baath regime should be allowed to vote.

* The peshmerga arrived in the city shortly before it came under the complete control of the insurgents. They occupied all the commandeered government vehicles, the bank and took over government properties, thus influencing people to concentrate on looting rather than the struggle.

* 16.3.91 - The anniversary of the Halabja Massacre. A memorial was organized by the Shuras, Kurdish Front, religious parties, Iraqi Communist Party, RF, and some small leftist groups. There were more than 10,000 Shura sympathizers, and the first speeches were made by various Shura groups. The CPS spoke about working class struggles in Turkey, Brazil, etc., how the proletariat and communism are against all nationalist movements and the conflict in Kurdistan is the same as all others, between work and capital, bourgeoisie and proletariat. The main slogans used were:

*"Bread, Work, Freedom",
"Bombs, tanks and planes will not chase us from this city",
"Only workers can bring about a different life."*

The Kurdish Front and nationalist Shuras and the religious people shouted them down, mocking and ridiculing their political positions.

* 17.3.91 - The Kurdish Front had not been paid the respect they felt they deserved at the memorial day and realized that the Shuras had widespread mass support. They started to broadcast lies on the radio about the Shuras, saying that many of them were ex-Ba'athists, looters, troublemakers and emphasizing how the Shuras despise religion, in an attempt to alienate any muslims from supporting them. They tried to spread rumours that the Shuras had collapsed because of their inability to lead the people and run the city and they announced the establishment of a Kurdish Peace Force.

* 18.3.91 - On hearing this, the Shuras arranged a meeting and decided to send 5 representatives to see the Kurdish Front, to discuss the rumours and solve the problem. However, many Shuras did not agree with this and organized demonstrations, using loudspeakers denouncing the reactionary and dangerous policies of the Kurdish Front.

CPS made it clear that they are not only against the Kurdish Front, but also against the Kurdish Nation and, along with the members of Hasta and Militant Front (Shura), disrupted the meeting...

This dispute clarified the positions of various Shuras and their individual members and they divided into 3 main factions:

1. Communist Perspective Shura
2. Radical Leftist organizations
3. PUK and KDP, or Kurdish Front

* 18.3.91 - Fighting began in Kirkuk. CPS and Leftist Shuras went to support the struggle. Many peshmerga went and returned with looted expensive cars, etc.

* 20.3.91 - Kirkuk was taken over and 6 Shuras were set up.

At this time the radio reported that Jalal Talabani was in Sulaimania and called for all inhabitants to go to the Peshmerga headquarters to hear 'what good news he has to give you'. The only people that went were their supporters and when they realized that support for the Shuras had increased and spread to other cities, they started rumours that government and Mujahideen Khalq army units had arrived in Chamchamal. They frightened people into leaving en masse, first, because there was a great fear of the Mujahideen Khalq and secondly, because they heard that that evening Jalal Talabani had been at Sheikh Salari Havid's house and had told him to advise all peshmerga families to leave as soon as possible. That same day the peshmerga and their families left the city and told people "The Army is coming..." as they went. Thirdly, the Shura's propaganda against the Kurdish Front and the Nationalists had been grossly inadequate and insufficient to convince people of the Kurdish Front's lies and quell their fear, particularly in the light of past massacres.

On the same day the Shuras organized a demo, telling people through loudspeakers "We will stay and fight... those who are leaving are cowards and the gravediggers of this city..."

70% of people left, 5000 soldiers and 60 tanks arrived the following day. Sulaimania was taken over after a fight, but there were no subsequent 'gratuitous' killings carried out by the Peshmerga against the population. However in Kirkuk and Chamchamal, revenge was wreaked on insurgents, including old people, children and even hospital in-patients...

* The cities of Kirkuk, Sulaimania, Chamchamal, etc., were recaptured soon. This was done mainly by Iraqi Communist Party, CPS and other Shura militants. Tanks and military vans were burned down. Nevertheless the end result was the same, as the State (PUK, KDP, Nationalists) returned and took over remaining property, 'to keep it in a safer place', i.e. to give it back to the government. Obviously some Shura members got 'very angry' (in an entirely ineffectual way) and argued with the Kurdish Front, telling them that issues of life and death are at stake and should not be played like a game of chess.

* 5 days after the start of the uprising in Sulaimania Shuras were holding daily meetings in Amin Zaki Bak School, attended by about 1000 people. Representatives from all the different Shuras came and raised various points for discussion. There were many arguments and some representatives stormed out of the assembly. The main points put forward were:

1. The need for solidarity with Shuras in the South.
2. Religion should be separated from the State.
3. The need for political freedom (Democracy).
4. Rule by the Shuras or by Parliamentary Democracy?
5. Self-determination for the Kurdish nation.
6. Equal rights for men and women.
7. The Allied Forces must pull out.
8. Class struggle or Nationalist struggle?

* 21.3.91 - one of the Shuras was keeping 9 secret policemen hostage but killed them without consulting the Kurdish Front.

* 23.3.91 - The Shura in Kirkuk took over the radio station and broadcast to the city. They also distributed all the food they had found in government supermarkets, and divided the houses of secret policemen up amongst the homeless.

* During the second uprising in Kirkuk city, the insurgents went to take over the Oil and Petrol plants outside the city. We were told that there was a battle lasting about 2 hours around one factory. The insurgents were being shot at as they approached, but they outnumbered the factory's defenders. After a while, the shooting stopped and people were surprised to see

nationalist peshmerga coming out of the building, signalling for the people to hold their fire, which they did. The peshmerga explained that the factories must not be looted as they are needed by the Kurdish state. (There you have it!).

* 3.4.91 - A demonstration was organised by CPS, SWE and proletarian Shuras. They counteracted rumours spread by scaremongers about the imminently advancing Iraqi forces and the collapse of the Basra uprising, attempting to curb the tide of people fleeing Sulaimania. Slogans used were "We will stay and fight!", information was broadcast about the strength of the Shuras, not only in Sulaimania, but throughout Iraq and people were encouraged to stay and support the movement.

That afternoon fighting started up again in Sulaimania. The army only held out against the rebels for a very short time, being rapidly disarmed following a fierce attack. Yet again, the Kurdish Front returned captured heavy artillery to the army.

* 29.6.91 - At the same time as the Nationalists were holding demonstrations in Duhok and Panjwin against the withdrawal of the Allied presence in Kurdistan (in contrast to Shura-led demos demanding that they get out) offices, shops and police stations continued to be attacked in Arbil, Sulaimania and Dehok, the insurgents commandeering further food and weapons whilst under fire by the Peshmerga. Similar struggles were also taking place in the Al-Thawra district of Baghdad.

* July 91 - The Iraqi Communist Party peshmerga, Shuras and other radical leftist group members went to Kalar (a town on the main route to Sulaimania) as they had received information that the Mujahideen Khalif, who had massacred the whole population of the town of Tchiman shortly before, was advancing on Sulaimania. Kalar is very small and is split down the centre by a dual carriageway. The insurgents hid themselves on the roofs of the houses and told everybody to be quiet until the unit entered the town. But when a woman saw that the soldiers were dressed in Kurdish clothes and had hung a portrait of Jalal Talabani on the tanks, she happily (stupidly) rushed out towards them. They then realized that the houses were inhabited and turned the tank guns on them and fired, first aiming at and killing the woman... the insurgents then started shooting, managing to blow up the tanks and kill all the Mujahideen. Some of them didn't believe that they were Mujahideen until they searched the bodies and found their papers.

* 13.7.91 - Food Aid had been given to the Kurdish Front to distribute to the "needy". Naturally, the Peshmerga had shared it out amongst their closest friends and were living well whilst the poor waited, for over a month, for food and medical supplies.

By the 13th people could not be fobbed off any longer... They attacked the Kurdish Front headquarters

in Zakho, injured and disarmed many Peshmerga and distributed the food supplies, going on to burn down the headquarters and the food warehouses. Some of the Peshmerga fled to Raniyah to get help and on their return searched houses for suspected 'ringleaders', imprisoning them, making them pay fines and releasing them after shaving their heads as an extra humiliating touch.

* 17.7.91 - There was a violent demo in Arbil which the Peshmerga again tried to bring under control, extolling the virtues of peaceful demonstration, suggesting people wait for the outcome of negotiations with the government. However, they were ignored and the Shura led attacks on government buildings under a slogan "Bread, Work, Freedom".

* 18.7.91 - Some of the Shuras held a meeting in Sulaimania and decided to support the struggle in Arbil by carrying out similar activities. They tried to keep their plans secret but Kurdish Front spies had infiltrated the Shuras, and knew that continued uprisings were inevitable but were determined to avoid a repeat of Arbil, where the movement left them behind. They thought of ways in which the struggle could be given the direction they desired:

1. By preventing the Shuras from organizing themselves.
2. By manipulating the movement into a purely violent struggle (guerrilla warfare, guns against guns, instead of class against class) a very successful policy, diverting people's attention from the true nature of the struggle.
3. By broadcasting propaganda denying that they had supported the Iraqi Army, prevented looting and aided police in Arbil thus denouncing Shura members as liars, as they had published accounts of such Peshmerga action in Arbil.

The Peshmerga changed tack, shooting soldiers and burning their vehicles, but soon realised that they had nowhere near as much support as the Shuras, whose influence was increasing daily. They tried yet another tactic, calling for a stop to the bloodshed, parading the streets as if on a victory march and then announced "The agreement has been signed. We have autonomy for Kurdistan, democracy for Iraq!"

* 20.7.91 - CPS, SWC and other leftist organisations organized another demo in Sulaimania. Their principal banner was again "Bread, Work, Freedom". Shura members heard that Barzani had given the Kurdish secret police permission to infiltrate the demos. The demo remained a peaceful march through the city, with the Shura members taking a back seat, only talking quietly to individuals, denouncing the Kurdish Front as the enemy, calling for formation of anti-nationalist Shuras, but this time from the sidelines only. The Shura made the mistake of underestimating the degree of mass support for them, largely as a result of insufficient contact with Shura militants in central and southern

Iraq. The Kurdish Front attacked them during the demo, destroying their banners, beating them up and imprisoning some of them. The Shura missed their chance of rallying massive public aggression against the Kurdish Front, which could have been sparked by a few militants turning their weapons on the Peshmerga. Instead the Shura members turned and ran - and they still cannot find words strong enough to express their regret for such a gross error.

* Beginning of September Communist Perspective Organisation received a letter purportedly from the Shuras, asking to arrange a meeting with them in Halabja. On the day of the meeting, Communist Perspective Organisation members were waiting in their headquarters for them. However, when a comrade saw approximately 400 armed PUK peshmergas advancing towards the area, the comrades realized they had been set up. They positioned themselves on the roof to defend themselves and many Shura and Communist Perspective Organisation sympathizers joined them.

The PUK had intended to disarm them and had written the bogus letter in order to be sure that active Communist Perspective Organisation members would be in the building at the time... The peshmerga realized that they were ready to retaliate and told them that they just wanted to talk, but Communist Perspective Organisation replied that there can be no point of common discussion between them and the peshmerga. When the peshmerga realized that the crowd were on the Communist Perspective Organisation's side, they turned back, telling people that nobody can talk to them, they are very aggressive...

SLOGANS THAT WERE USED BY THE SHURAS

1. Bread, Work, Freedom. Shuras' government.
2. Long live rule by the Shuras'.
3. All power to the Shuras.
4. The only alternative to the Baathist regime is the Shuras.
5. Freedom of speech, opinion and organisation.
6. Unconditional political freedom.
7. We should be armed to safeguard the Shuras' Rule.
8. Equal rights for men and women.
9. We demand Workers' Councils, not parliamentary democracy.
10. Halabja, Budenan are the Hiroshimas of Kurdistan.
11. For a 35 hour working week.
12. Revolutionary people! Set up and join Shuras.
13. The right of dispossessed villagers to return home.
14. Rise up and fight! Break the institutions of fear!
15. The occupying forces must get out of Kurdistan.
16. Long live self-determination for the Kurdish nation.
17. Long live solidarity with all workers' Shuras.
18. No rebuilding police stations, Jash and public

- militias.
19. The Shuras will heal the wounds of Kurdistan's exploited.
 20. All administrative organs should be democratically elected.

TRANSLATION OF LEAFLETS DISTRIBUTED BY VARIOUS SHURAS.

"Do the Kurdish Front and Nationalists share common interests with the Baathists?

If not, how can it be explained why, when we attacked the secret police headquarters, The Kurdish Front seemed to share their pain and called for us to 'Calm down...you have got them surrounded in any case...' Why should it be that the Kurdish Front shot soldiers, but spared the lives of secret policemen? And how is it that the day after the attack on the headquarters, the policemen were in position on the roof of the building fully armed?

We all saw how Peshmerga handed back commandeer tanks and artillery to government forces. Does this not mean that the Kurdish Front is not infact protecting the State and its Baathist Regime? The answer is yes and we must recognize them as the enemy of the people."

(NEW LIFE - SSFA)

"The proletariat must distinguish itself from nationalism and the Parties of God and proletarian socialism cannot survive if it does not realize this separation. Nor can it remain standing without a powerful autonomous organisation that can effectively take on the tasks of the proletariat and the exploited in general. In their daily struggles, proletarians and the exploited masses must express their autonomy, must show everybody that they have a social movement of their own, a different social perspective and that they are not followers of capital and its free market. They are not linked up with any American strategy (the New World Order), nor with any Arabic or Kurdish nationalism or any other Parties of God.

On the contrary, they must show that they oppose all of these and that they have a completely different aim - dictatorship of the proletariat and universal liberation. This why it is essential for proletarians in their daily activities, in assemblies, in strikes, in their claimst and watchwards... should put forward their political interests. In this process socialist proletarians, radical factions and the avant-guards of the movement have the practical task of assuring the formation, propaganda and organisation of proletarians within a different framework. We have to confront the miserable conditions of life, the economic blockade... If we are told that our unity and protests are inappropriate and

serve the interests of the Baathist power, then the socialist proletariat's answer is clear:

We do not want to sacrifice ourselves to interbourgeois antagonisms, and whilst against the economic blockade, proletarians are demanding wage rises for those contributing to production... Proletarians must fight against the pressure of the imperialist United Nations police force in Kurdistan and in the South, because these forces are not only not helping people, but on the contrary, put into practice capitalist policies to destroy revolutionary forces.

There is no doubt about the fact that current working class struggle throughout the world, and particularly in Iraq, has shown that the proletariat cannot achieve anything whilst divided. This is the reason why we must stick together and fight to set up general assemblies, to organize a centralized movement that can give strength to proletarians to 'mount the world stage' and become truly active, representing the needs of their struggle... Only as a centralized and united movement, will the proletariat be able to confront the bourgeoisie and get their message across to proletarians throughout the rest of the world. It is only in this way that, in the face of other tendencies existing within the movement, socialist proletarians and socialist groups will be able to develop and realize the communist contents of proletarian struggle..."

(WORKERS VIEW No 1 CAG)

"Contradiction between bourgeoisie and working class, the development of proletarian perspectives and social change were all at the heart of the March uprising. Since then, struggle by the exploited in Iraq against the capitalist way of life, has been apparent in repeated agitational activity against the state.

Widespread reinforcement of self-organisation and the creation of workers shuras signifies an important qualitative step in the revolutionary development of proletarian political activity.

Workers were fully involved in setting up shuras in many liberated towns. In Arbil, cigarette factory workers, weavers and chicken farmers set up shuras and subsequently a centre for workers shuras was established. The aim was to have a headquarters through which the activity of various shuras could be coordinated. Similarly in Sulaimania cigarette, electricity, clothes and municipal workers including 'Tahrir' and 'Hamuraby' factory workers, formed shuras at 'Nassir' camp. Chicken farmers and the unemployment in Sulaimania set up a joint shura with petrol workers in Kirkuk.

The main point of discussion during the first workers assembly was the need for self-organisation and its importance in class struggle. Speeches were made about the Shuras and their formation.

In subsequent meetings workers, who were thrilled to take part, elected representatives in free and direct voting. Economic and political suggestions were made

and basic aims and principles agreed. Municipal workers from Sulaimania read out a report, which was later published about links between workers and political parties.

These meetings showed workers what strength can be found in unity and they began to feel that Big Brother was no longer waiting over them. From time to time, from every corner, workers would stand up and describe the poverty and misery of life imposed by capitalism and the repression and intimidation they suffered under bosses and capitalists. They gave accounts of barbaric and inhuman behaviour and the unbearable life of workers. Following on from previous world wide historical experience the bell of liberty, equality and workers' government rang throughout Iraq... The creation of shuras is not only expressed worker power against the bourgeoisie by way of determined self-organisation, but also gave them a useful and necessary instrument with which to require the unity of political and social demands and establish widespread political organisation.

The sight of a liberated town gives an idea of the scale of battles fought by workers for freedom and true equality. As a socio-political force, workers emerged from the depths of society to an serious social and political roles. As large militant organisations and workers' power bases, shuras have became a reality, setting a precedent in the history of the Iraqi working class. However, they result from the experiences of more than 10 years social change within Iraq, as well as from the history of workers' shuras throughout the world.

As the despotic Baathist regime weakened, workers were able to breath more easily and began to carry out more large scale class activities...

The shura movement spread like gospel amongst the workers... The movement developed in spite of the weaknesses of our movement. However, it was weakness of organisation, the isolation and separation of radical socialist avant-grade militants and a lack of communist vision and socialist perspective that allowed reformists to take over. As a result of this, the brutality of the state's counter-offensive, the reinvansion of the towns and the short duration of the uprising, the workers did not have enough time to overcome their weaknesses with regard to the shuras.

The "exploited" had organized themselves into shuras in most camps, villages and towns in liberated areas of kurdistan, but the weakness of workers' shuras had a bad influence on the creation and running of such "poor people's" shuras.

The bourgeois opposition parties tried desperately to put their policies into practice, for fear of the class demands and economic, social and political programme of the shuras enabling the workers to take power. The opposition parties made use of the institutions and organs of repression of the former regime.

In the south of Iraq, the reactionary 'Shia' movement set up its own 'Islamic Shuras' in order to discredit and manipulate the only radical workers' shuras. In Kurdistan, the Nationalists didn't hesitate to use all necessary

force against workers' associations. They shot at striking workers, threatened their leaders, protected and armed the bosses and broadcast workers' demands as originating from anarchist and trouble makers. This antagonism between Nationalism forces and workers' shuras determined the political climate in Kurdistan.

Now, following the reinvansion if towns by the barbaric Baathist regime, social and political perspectives are as before with famine, misery, poverty, unemployment threatening the life of workers more than ever. However, the dissatisfaction that sprung up well before the uprising will continue to spuron a battle against this world, carrying the memories of the uprising with it.

The military counter-offensive on the regime, the alliance between Kurdish Nationalists and central government can not be erased from workers' memories and activities...

(PROLETARIAT No 6 CPO)



The situation of the Shura members is now fairly precarious. They have to keep up to date, hour by hour, on the activities of the Nationalists and the Army. The Shura now have information networks from city to city, which largely involve individuals travelling at short notice around the area. They are worried that the

Kurdish Front might secretly allow army divisions into Sulaimania or that they may have inside information about the movements of government troops..

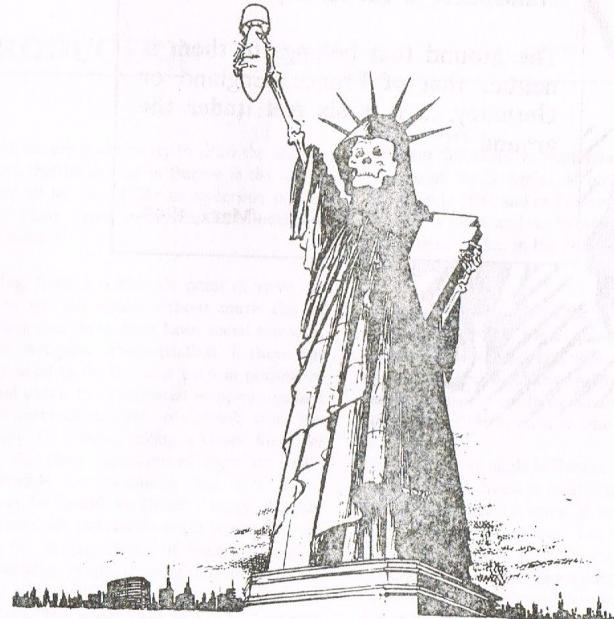
A few members of the Shuras know from experiences in the Sanandaj revolution, that when the Nationalists scatter and desert a city without warning the inhabitants, a massacre is imminent. They are therefore on the lookout for mass movements of Kurdish Front forces.

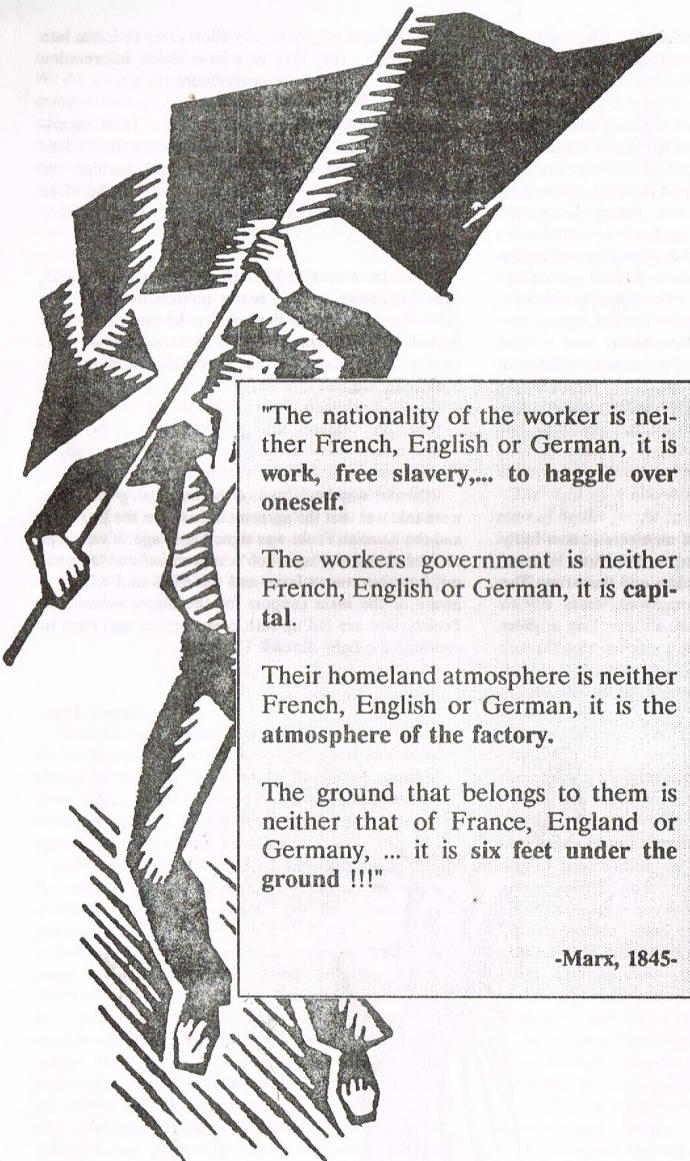
One day a man in Kurdish clothes was shot dead, who was known to be a secret policeman. The documents he had on him showed that he had permission from Masoud Barzani to pose as a peshmerga. It is unclear who killed him, but it was definitely not the Nationalists.



On our way back, one of the interesting things we were told was that the agreement between the Baathists and the Kurdish Front was signed ages ago. It was kept secret because the issues of 'compromise' and 'autonomy' have become a farce and the PUK and KDP are aware of the mass support for the Shura movement. Proletarians are fed up with compromises and want to continue the fight instead.

-August 1991-





"The nationality of the worker is neither French, English or German, it is work, free slavery,... to haggle over oneself.

The workers government is neither French, English or German, it is capital.

Their homeland atmosphere is neither French, English or German, it is the atmosphere of the factory.

The ground that belongs to them is neither that of France, England or Germany, ... it is six feet under the ground !!!"

-Marx, 1845-

-BURMA-



STRUGGLES AND RIOTS TO BE REMEMBERED !

1. INTRODUCTION

In this text we are going to try to draw the lessons of the struggles that broke out in Burma in the spring of '88. First of all we would like to underline one or two points to place these events in their local and international context.

Considering, from a worldwide point of view, the past ten years, we can assert without much risk of making mistakes that there have been social tensions, confrontations, struggles, which confirm, if there has ever been any need to do so, that even in periods of profound social peace the proletariat is never crushed totally, that it never disappears completely from the scene of history. Of course, taking a closer look, we notice at once that those explosions of anger are weak, that the demands are confused, etc. The same weaknesses can be found in almost every struggle wherever it breaks out and the events in Burma are not exceptions to the characteristics of today's struggles, which are sporadic, rarely concomitant in different countries, and occur within sectorial, national or other sorts of frontiers. The reader will find in our reviews

different attempts to understand, analyze and draw lessons of the struggles of our class: hunger riots in Morocco in 1984 and in Tunisia in 1986, the conflicts in Poland, in Gaza and the West Bank, in England during the miners' strike, in the Iran-Iraq war, in Algeria and in Argentina,.....

As to the struggle of the proletariat in Burma, we want to underline some quite important qualitative differences in comparison with other struggles close in time. They are of relative importance of course. Their importance only exists in relation with the context of social peace, the context of our class anaesthesia.

First, the struggle in Burma can be distinguished by its duration: it lasted at least seven months. Then by its massiveness; indeed, even if we know very well that never during its history has the proletariat been defeated by the lack of numbers (the lack is rather qualitative than quantitative), it's to be underlined that there were not just one or two sectors, one or two factories in the foreground, even though that's how the

movement had started - like anywhere else. In Burma, all what the bourgeois press calls "the population", "the people", very quickly committed themselves in the struggle: some helped insurgents to hide, giving them shelter and food; others demonstrated in the streets or looted the shops, attacking all symbols of wealth, others, like the soldiers for instance, refused to shoot or even deserted. Many proletarians joined the general strikes and entire cities were paralysed.

Finally, the third important point of this struggle is the organization of the insurgents. We know that entire cities and ports were emptied of their administration and ruled by the insurgents for a while. We know that the targets of the looting were not chosen by chance and that facing the bourgeois terror a proletarian counter-terror was organized: self-defence groups were set up, police headquarters looted, the defence of large areas of the suburb of Rangoon assumed. We think we may affirm that for the past few years there have been many attempts to lead the struggles a proletarian way.

But, unfortunately, in this case even more than in that of the struggles in Iran and Iraq we depend on the information given by the bourgeois press. Therefore we have tried to gather as much information as possible from the largest number of newspapers available. We consulted the press of a lot of countries from China to France, from Cuba to Italy. But no information is reliable and the result is not the same as it would be if we could have gone there or received news from militants.

From October '88, the news items got rarer and fewer, so meagre, so poor that we don't really know what has been going on there since about December '88.

However, this doesn't mean that the bourgeois order has been restored or that the proletarian move

ment has been crushed. Experience taught us that the death of a struggle movement is generally proclaimed, shouted out and praised by the bourgeoisie as the victory of democracy over this or that dictatorship, as the triumph of a national liberation movement over a government paid by this power or that bloc. The withdrawal of the troops, the creation of a new independent State, the promises of elections very soon, the recognition of the opposition,... usually mark the defeat of the movement, the end of the struggle. We haven't heard anything like this about Burma. We haven't seen any clear signs of the political publicity generally mobilized by the bourgeois to mark their victory against the proletarians, the crushing of a proletarian struggle.

The bourgeois black out, the very fact that the subject of "Burma" almost completely disappeared from the pages of newspapers, have proved again that the bourgeoisie wants to divert the attention of all those who might have a feeling of community with this struggle. According to the bourgeoisie, of course, the proletarians in Burma set a very bad example to their brothers all over the world. The bourgeois world State does everything to repress the movement in the Burma itself by supporting the Burmese bourgeois on the one hand, and to smother its example, preventing its spreading outside, thanks to the powerful media. But the silence the bourgeoisie tries to impose does not mean that the bourgeois order has been restored in Burma. The social situation and the hatred for the State make the equilibrium the bourgeoisie tries to impose by terror extremely precarious. To live, the proletarians are forced to negate the laws and to confront the bourgeoisie. From this and the past waves of struggles the proletarians in Burma have drawn lessons which will make it possible for them to be in the vanguard of the world proletariat in this region for the big fights to come.

However, this doesn't mean that the bourgeois order has been restored or that the proletarian move

2. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE SOCIAL EXPLOSION

26 years of General Ne Win's leadership at the head of the BSPP (Burmese Socialist Program Party) only resulted in accelerating and catastrophically deepening the ruinous effects of the capitalist world crisis. Burma, considered in the fifties as one of the biggest rice producers and exporters, has now become one of the "poorest" countries of the planet. The living conditions of the proletarians have extremely rapidly deteriorated. The annual per capita income has tumbled from \$ 690 in 1960 to \$ 190 in 1988, which is lower than that in China.

reinforcing of the "Independent National State" and the crushing of the proletariat in the name of nation and democracy (a well-known method from the Philippines to Nicaragua, from Europe to China). U Nu, overthrown by General Ne Win in 1962, went into exile and later came back to take the lead of the "democratic opposition".

The proletarians' economic situation has become catastrophic during the past years: the average wage was worth one cup of tea daily for each member of a family of 3 members, in 1988. The black market is the only way to survive. In September '87, the government removed 70% of the banknotes without warning or compensation.

Even so, the proletarians in Burma do not live in conditions as miserable and extreme as our brothers of Bangladesh and India do. The rapid concentration of capital, and of exploitation determined in Burma the development of the proletariat and of its struggles, even though the latter were controlled and repressed by a national union of the Stalinist kind. Due to this "development", on the one hand, there is an "educated" proletariat, "organized into trade unions", but on the other hand, the traditions of struggle are much stronger than in the neighbouring countries.

In Burma, religion is not of much importance, but it is interesting and characteristic that there, the same way as in Russia (where the Orthodox Russian Church coexisted with the one-party government and took an active part in the military mobilization of proletarians for the 1939-45 war), the Stalinist faction of the bourgeoisie has maintained a considerable number of Buddhist priests, even though their ideological influence on the proletariat has been insignificant (this isn't true for India, for instance). The religious institutions have served as a kind of security reserve for the bourgeoisie and during the last period of the uprising, Buddhist monks would do the job for which they have been kept in reserve: pacifying the movement, imposing the banner of non-violence and democracy, fighting (sometimes physically) the violent manifestations of the need of the proletariat.

The past three decades have seen the slowly increasing militancy of the proletariat (violently expressed in the '70s) determined by the deterioration of the living conditions. To face this, the bourgeoisie had to develop a lovely range of different and competitive bourgeois factions to channel the revolt, to enrol the proletarian fights in fights which are absolutely alien from the causes of their revolt, from their needs. Until 1988, the most efficient factions were the guerrilla movements, the pro-Chinese, pro-Indian, pro-British, pro-Russian,... nationalist groups (1).

That assortment proved to be enough during more than twenty years to enrol the discontent proletarians and to kill them slowly in fights between the various armed groups and in the army of the State. But inside the army a growing discontent was developing because of the deterioration of the living conditions there also, the weariness, the lassitude of the endless combats. The relative equilibrium expressed by a relative social peace, with continuous combats in the mountains and along the borders on the one hand, and the violent imposition of work in most areas, and first of all in the big cities, on the other hand, thus, this relative equilibrium worked thanks to (and in) a context of relative economic stability.

But, since the deepening of the world economic crisis in the seventies, problems began to accumulate: the world market prices moved violently up and down, the competition between various groups of capitalists sharpened and the exploitation increased. In Burma, the ruling faction was in a dilemma as to how to adapt to the changing international conditions while facing the real menace of working class uprisings. This phenomenon became more and more acute, because, facing the development of the wrath of the working class, the bourgeoisie had already been forced to put forward its radical faction. But if Stalinist reformism (considered erroneously as a "violation of general norms of capitalism") is necessary to fight against the working class; on the other hand, Stalinism as a ruling bourgeois faction is a trump the bourgeoisie burns, making it useless for the future. So the hands of the Stalinist governments are more or less tied when they have to consider (because of the local concretizations of the world crisis) the possibility of reforms. They have to shake the status

(1) There are many ethnic minorities in Burma that are fighting for the independence of their patch of land. These autonome groups are generally situated along the borders and have been waging war against the government for more than 20 years while fighting each other as well. The strongest guerrilla group during the revolt in 1988 was that of the CP of Burma, which practically didn't intervene at all during the struggle. The next is the Karen, a real state within the state with its own army of course, and with compulsory military service, as well, its cops, its universities, its own laws, lawyers, its highly developed network of production and exchange... The Karen occupy a zone of about 600 kms along the Thai border. They are more than 2 million and 4000 of them are constantly armed. They represented in 1988 the second strongest oppositional armed force just after the "CP" guerrilla group that is situated along the Chinese frontier. The Karen's principal income come from smuggling.

Right from the beginning of the movement the Karen tried to contact the insurgents and form "activists" for the combat. Though after the coup, 5000 to 10.000 young men joined the Karen to learn the army drill; no autonome-type demands occurred during the struggle, nor did the proletarian militants let themselves be enrolled by separatist groups during the fight. Today there are at least 9 groups supposed to be united within the National Democratic Front, which comprises about 30.000 armed fighters who are in a constant discord.

quo in which they feel at ease to avoid the weakening of their country in the international competition. But they know by experience that shaking the form of their extremely static government might cause even more trouble because the proletarians might see a breach and rush into it.

The bourgeoisie won't forget the "destalinisation" in Russia which resulted in "outflankings" it would rather have done without. "Conservative" forces following the letter of the stalinist dogma refuse any kind of reforms, because their fear of the proletariat is greater than the weight of the necessity to make the country competitive in the world market (cf. Ceausescu, Brezhnev,...); the "reformists" rather choose a general reform of the economic - and, accordingly, political - structures, they incline to favour "a sort of westernization" (cf. Yeltsin,...). Eventually, the "pragmatic" faction overcomes (cf. Gorbachev, Ne Win,...) undertaking half-hearted reforms and trying to conserve the essence of the old version of bourgeois government.

Of course, it is not a question of choosing a "better" or a "worse" solution, it is a question of emergency in the context of the deepening world crisis of capitalism. One expression of this is the pendular movement, the oscillation movement swinging to "the right" then to "the left"; pendulum movement between taking reform measures and their withdrawal, one step towards the "westernization of the economic politics", then another step towards the reinforcement of central control; measures to change the political structures, then (in the form of "counter-reforms" or sometimes of a "military coup") measures to consolidate the old structures.

In the seventies, this swinging movement was characteristic to Burma: political opening, loans on the international financial market, encouraging people to learn English,... and then, isolationist moves with increasing efforts to pay the debt back, increasing central control in the political life, a ban on the English courses at the schools,... But all this couldn't stop the local effects of the world crisis of Capital and the worsening of the social situation. The bourgeoisie, no matter what their ideology is, necessarily MUST diminish the social wage, increase the exploitation, deteriorate the working conditions, directly or indirectly (shortages) raise the prices, reinforce state terror making reference to the interests of the "true" (parliamentarist) democracy (reforms), or to those of the "people's democracy" (called "dictatorship of the proletariat" by stalinists).

We mustn't forget that the situation had already been tense in Burma since the fifties which implied, even before the deepening of the world crisis, a local militarization of the State administrative apparatus and the economy.

From the bourgeois point of view, the worsening of the social situation meant the accumulation of problems

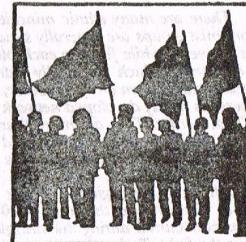
with the industrial and agricultural production (in '87 they decreased drastically and the exports went down to a minimum level mainly because of internal tensions), the weight of the debt,... The fragile stability was disappearing with the price-rises, the increase of the pressure of capital on the working class; the situation of the latter became unbearable. For the proletariat, life was getting more and more expensive every day and the wages were insufficient to feed the families, which compelled the workers to work ever more to buy rice.

An example: the daily wage of a worker amounted to 10 kyats in 1988 (officially, in August '88, one dollar was worth 6 or 7 kyats while on the black market the exchange rate was 40 kyats for one dollar). In 1988 the price of the rice increased by 400%, we can imagine the situation of the proletarians whose average wage was 10 kyats while it cost 50 to feed one family!

What's more, the commerce totally aligned itself to the black market prices, that is to say goods were sold at a price six times higher than the regular ("official") price. For the proletarians it became impossible to avoid the deepening of poverty, even trying some funny business, working overtime,... weren't enough any more.

From the point of view of the capitalist order, the everlasting solution to escape the crisis is the massive destruction of commodities (mainly the proletarians, because they are the most dangerous ones). This destruction will then make it possible, just like a good breath of fresh air, to re-invest, re-build, give work... Therefore, this capitalist order has to massacre the proletarians: "peacefully" starving them to death, if possible, or by killing them more rapidly and efficiently in internal or international wars.

In Burma, the decrease of wages went thus under the minimum level of daily existence, and this situation, permanent in Bangladesh or in India, provoked here a real shock. The difference between "life" in 1988 and twenty years before was all the less bearable since all the expectations that the situation would take a change for the better had gradually vanished. On the other hand, the situation of the soldiers (proletarians in uniform) followed the same pattern: problems of food, permanent wars against the autonomists, families ruined by the crisis and on the verge of starvation, etc. These elements led to desertion and refusal to shoot at demonstrators.



3. THE STRUGGLES

In February and March '87, more than 200 officers of Rangoon (capital of Burma) and Mandalay (the second largest town) were arrested for having criticized, during a religious service held for the soldiers, Ne Win's economical policy of the "empty iron rice bowl" (ironical diversion of the declarations and goals of General Ne Win who claimed he would give a rice bowl to every citizen). Then, in March '88, riots broke out after the police murdered a student during the repression of a demonstration. Confrontations lasted more than a week and the initial reasons of the rioters changed into a refusal of the government decision to take out of circulation all the banknotes of more than 15 kyats ("to fight against black market") - the same measure with the same argument was taken in Russia by the Gorbachev administration, in 1991. The real aim of this step was to diminish even more drastically the "buying power" of the proletarians in Burma. A massive revolt followed: rioters set shops on fire and attacked those they considered rich, taking their possessions away.

In May and June '88: further strikes and demonstrations, further looting. General Ne Win imposed the martial law and the curfew. As it often happens, the social movement in Burma started from the "student" sector, which isn't surprising, considering how faint their hopes were to get a job and how dark the future they had to confront was - "they": the proletarians not yet unleashed in the employment arena. But the worsening of the economical situation rapidly made thousands of people go down to the streets and support the young "student" proletarians. General Ne Win mobilized the elite troops in the capital to crush the movement.

During the summer, the number of rioters increased. In August '88 some reports spoke about millions of demonstrators. Several police quarters were looted. "Protesters seize guns", China Daily wrote on 11th August, "A number of police stations are in the hands of the demonstrators and they have seized the weapons from the police". The Burmese bourgeois reacted with the well-known mixture of promises and repression. The government promised to introduce reforms in the economy, and, as it always happens in countries ruled by a Stalinist government, stressed the "westernization", which "will bring welfare to the people". At the same time, the police and the army fired at the crowd and killed several demonstrators.

Since July proletarians had gone to the offensive: more and more often in Rangoon, but also in other big towns like Mandalay, rioters undertook an active fight against the state and the private property. They fought with iron clubs and sharpened bicycle spokes, with

knives and swords, machetes,... they beheaded militaries, attacked the villas of government officials, etc.

In the port of Rangoon the workers refused to unload the freighters. Those carrying food were looted. The insurrectional pressure was so strong that General Ne Win resigned on 23rd July. General Sein Lwin, called "the butcher of Rangoon" for his role in the bloody repression of the March demonstrations, took his place. It was him who gave his soldiers the following order: "Hit to kill, shoot to kill". General Sein Lwin pledged a total reform of the economy and the introduction of a multiparty system in Burma. "General Sein Lwin's reputation for brutality has been balanced (sic) in recent weeks with a rare show of pragmatism in promoting reforms" - The Guardian, August 11.

Although the press tried to underestimate the insurrectional elements of the demonstrations (and will always do so), stressing (as it always does) the democratic aspects of the struggles, the latter reached, at the end of August, such a violence that the press just didn't talk about it any more. Only a few lines filter here and there, as for instance the burning of the houses of 36 ministers and deputies by angry demonstrators.

August was a month of continuous riots. The proletariat took the power in several towns. In the port of Kowsong, the inhabitants assaulted the office buildings and threatened to set them on fire. They expelled the employees and the police. In Pegu, a lot of soldiers joined the insurgents and together they prevented the arrival of military reinforcement coming from the capital. In Prome, some soldiers refused to shoot at the crowd. In Toungoo, an officer is said to have been killed by his soldiers who also refused to shoot at demonstrators. In Rangoon, different units of the army shot at each other, which shows the social confrontation existing within the army; all the accesses to the city were closed to prevent the inhabitants of other cities from going to help the insurgents of the capital. The buddhist clergy interceded and implored the government to give the proletarians some concessions in order to be able to impose law and order again. On 10th August, an incident quite revealing of the depth and the extent of the social confrontation, an airplane was dropping leaflets on Rangoon threatening to bomb the city if the people kept on resisting the army. On 14th, a diplomat holding a post in Rangoon said: "Hunger is the engine of the uprising, democracy comes after"; and the French newspaper "Libération" wrote on 30th: "Burma is drifting (off), the insurrection has spread all over the country and is on the capital doorstep..." It is quite significant that the government accused (and therefore recognized the existence of) "a network of

clandestine organisation that feeds and coordinates the movement". "The present instability is due to the organization and the intervention of these troublemakers", it said. Liberation on 14th August added: "The movement is structured into closed cells, gathering a few individuals knowing each other very well and trusting each other". Contacts were made with old militants who had participated in the movements of '70 in Burma and '73 in Thailand (those movements directly belonging to the worldwide wave of struggles of 1967-1973). The press talked about at least 6 clandestine groups acting together, and about 30 secret leaders acting through the student union created on 17th March and banned by the authorities without any delay. The bourgeoisie might spectacularly stress the aspects of organization and leadership of the struggle, which does not always exist, to frighten the citizens, nevertheless this kind of campaign there was based on real aspects of organization and leadership of our class.

During August, thousands of demonstrators were massacred by the army. Reports speak of 3000 deaths in only one week. General Sein Lwin, unable to calm down the confrontations in spite of the promises and massacres, resigned on 12th, giving his place to Maung Maung, a lawyer. The bourgeoisie tried to calm down the situation, placing a puppet at the head of the government. Straight away the latter demanded peace and tranquillity, a sine qua non for the recovery of the economy. He suppressed the martial law to show his will of pacification (but of course the army kept on shooting at demonstrators). Maung Maung's fight against the proletarian was supported by part of the "democratic opposition", like General Aung Gyu, a reformist military leader, who had accused the former governments of corruption and had been arrested in July for having "attacked the state". Confident in the "good image" his past of "an oppressed of the regime" gave him, this general stood for non-violence on both sides "to avoid anarchy and more bloodshed", as he said. Maung Maung introduced an amnesty for some prisoners, most of whom (but it was kept secret) were members of the bourgeois factions jailed by the military regime: democrats, nationalists, liberals,... Many thousands of proletarians remained in jail, which later led to one of the biggest massacres in Burma.

It is important to stress that the common efforts of the government (promises of reforms, amnesties and police terror) and of the opposition (discourses on anarchy, participation in the demonstrations to impose non-violence and the respect for property) didn't manage, at this stage, to pacify, calm down or crush the movement of resistance, which was threatening to escalate into a general insurrection.

The opposition supported the government and cooperated with the army, while always stressing the importance of "pacific protests against dictatorship" and of the necessity of avoiding chaos. Monks also participated in the struggle against subversion, calling the

army units to defend a factory attacked by "a gang of more than 500 criminals", then they organized an "alternative system" of self-management, shouting loud and clear their submission to the rioters interests! Another figure of the opposition came into the lime-light: Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (nicknamed by the media "the Burmese Cory Aquino"), the daughter of a Burmese independence leader, Aung San killed by a bourgeois rival faction in 1947. With this aura of prestige, she fought for democracy and multiparty system, with the clear conscience of the bourgeois humanists, exterminators of the working class in struggle.

By the end of August, the proletarians' movement gained importance in the army as well as in other capitalist institutions. Defections from the army became massive, soldiers turned their arms against their officers. At the same time, there were proletarian revolts in several prisons of the country. Some escaped and many prisoners were massacred. 13kms from the capital, in the prison of Insein, surrounded by the army, rioters set the buildings on fire and tried to break through the military cordon to escape. 2 of 6 thousand managed to fight their way out but at least 1000 prisoners were killed in the continuous outfire of the army. Later, the government ordered a new amnesty and freed the rest of the prisoners from the jails, which had become in all cases unusable and uncontrollable, almost everywhere in ruins... In August and September, more and more soldiers could be seen with other proletarians. Rifles appeared side by side with the bicycle spokes and machetes, though the latter remained the dominant weaponry and beheading the dominant method to kill the bourgeoisie.

At this point it is important to go into details speaking about the role played by the different bourgeois factions, and, on the other hand, about the way the international press reported the events. Two kinds of pacifism, of non-violent discourses have emerged:

^{1*} The first one was the traditional propaganda for non-violence: "We demonstrate peacefully, we demand reforms, rights, amnesty, change of government, and all this in a peaceful way", (even the catholic priests and nuns joined the demonstrations in September with the slogan "Jesus loves democracy"; Burma's Supreme Buddhist Patriarch called for restraint while the troops pursued demonstrators into the hospitals shooting at everybody). Events, however, quickly surpassed that kind of propaganda. Proletarians resisted the massacres and the attempts to lead their struggle astray. This is why the bourgeois opposition pushed by the necessity to stay credible began to radicalize itself and accepted, and even encouraged, violence against the ruling faction. The former, absolute non-violence-type discourses transformed into a propaganda for "differentiated violence".

^{2*} The other pacifism tried to be more... violent! "One

may behead soldiers and policemen of this government because it has no right to exist, terrorism can be OK but only as a means of installing a pluralistic democracy. BUT, shoplifting, stealing in offices or boats, looting houses of the rich, etc. are counter-revolutionary activities. Criminals who take alien properties will be executed." That was the discourse and the ideology of those radical democrats.

In some towns, where the representatives of the national State administration had been chased by the insurgents, the local democratic forces, supported by the commercial bourgeoisie, the professionals and the monks, organized structures to maintain the production and the market, to defend the private property,....

leading astray towards bourgeois interests the attempts of proletarian leadership. But the proletarian movement still wasn't defeated and kept the strength to fight, strength shown by the constitution of self defence militias and proletarian organizations in the worker neighbourhoods of the suburbs and even in whole towns.

The two stars of the opposition, Daw Aung San Kyi and General Aung Gyi, issued then a call to create an "interim" government "to give democracy to the people". The call didn't take any effect. Looting continuously spread and in almost every case the targets were stores of food (mostly rice). To crush the proletarian resistance, the bourgeoisie resorted to massacres.

4. SOCIAL TENSIONS WITHIN THE ARMY

Within the army, known as one of the most disciplined armies of Asia, dissensions were more and more fierce. The living conditions of the soldiers, while better than those of the other proletarians, were far from being good. The compulsory military service was long and hard, the pay was meagre, the canteen rationed, the iron discipline was maintained by extreme brutality; corruption was widespread. On the other hand, the army was constantly on war against the different guerrilla groups. This situation brought along increasing discontent. The tension had increased so that in August '88 "elements of the army came in the National Bank of Commerce to take under the threat of their weapons

600 millions of Kyats to be distributed to the soldiers" -Liberation, 9/9/88-

The discontent and the resistance of the proletarians wearing a uniform increased day after day. Soldiers participated in looting. Mutinies burst in several military bases. In at least 3 towns soldiers went over to the side of the rioters. But in spite of all this the army did not disintegrate; it always remained master of the terrain and, in spite of defections and mutinies, the proletariat could not emerge out of and against this structure of the bourgeois state.

5. THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS THE OPPOSITION

The vital necessity for the bourgeoisie to deny the class confrontation taking place in Burma expressed itself in different ways: according to some there were only "students' demonstrations", or "groups of people" defending their "specific interests"; according to others it was the defence of the "general interests of the people"; it was "democratization" that was claimed for. But, during the summer of '88 the difficulty to hide the tendency of the proletarians in Burma to "anarchy" (2) urged the media to concentrate on the "political aspects" rather than on the events. The chorus about the danger of chaos and anarchy was followed by

discourses and declarations of oppositional factions and of daughters of heroes of independence, etc.

At the beginning of September the government rejected the call for an "interim government". Maung Maung seemed to have understood the overriding general interest of his class: to preserve an opposition whose influence on the movement might become important. Neither the world capital nor its local managers had any interest in destroying the nascent credibility of the opposition by letting it enter the government.

(2) By these "tendencies to anarchy" we mean disrespect towards private property, law, etc., we mean disrespect for the bourgeois values and norms, for those who defend them and for those who teach them. We support this kind of anarchy and stand for it as the struggle of our class for the satisfaction of its needs.

Moreover, it is much likely that this premature opening would not have been sufficient to channel the movement, while it would have risked to weaken the local bourgeoisie. Far from being able to understand it, Daw Aung and her friend, the old General, as well as the grandson of the ex-secretary general of the United Nations, U Thant, and other democrats would have been ready to decredit themselves in exchange for government power. But, to let it happen would have been stupid of the bourgeoisie. It was much more useful that the general strike paralysing several towns and carried on in Rangoon, could remain a "protest action" claimed by the "democratic forces", which had just got on the moving train. U Nu, an anti-fascist bourgeois leader of the early 60s, formed a "transitional

anti-government" with his "League for Democracy and Peace" joining Daw Aung San to try to channel the general discontent towards the claim for a multi-party system, for democracy and for the human rights - rights of the good citizen, faithful patriot, good worker and serious family man!

At this stage, world capitalism had already begun to prepare the future arrangements and inter-imperialist struggles after the smashing of the proletarian movement. Since long many countries had already fought to get a part of the territory surrounded by the Burmese borders, and some of them were still interested in setting up military bases along the Indian Ocean coastline.

6. THE OPPOSITION UNITES TO GET RID OF THE GOVERNMENT

While riots continued in many places, democrats hurried to take the situation in their hand. Meanwhile the army "reinforced defensive positions at the Ministry of Defense, the radio station, the main railway bridge, the residential district of the ruling elite...". Little by little everything was being set for the "last" ideological as well as military massacre of proletarians... Before this, the bourgeoisie took the last step to divide the proletariat into "criminals" and "democrats".

On 11th September, the parliament decided the ratification of the pledge to have free elections and establish a multi-party system (3). The New York Times reported on 13th Sept.: "demonstrators do not follow the official democratization line or the oppositional groups", which "can not offer any immediate leader or organization" acceptable for the insurgents. U Nu, the self-made leader of the "rival government" "appears to have been mostly ignored by the demonstrators". Tin Oo, former defense minister who had defected from the Socialist Program Party (the governing party of the country), Aung San Kyi and Aung Gyi asked protesters "to be patient", saying that "the people should continue peaceful demonstrations, using the weapon of moral courage"... By the middle of September, as Time wrote, Burma was "at the edge of anarchy", because "the government agreed to elections, but mass protests continued". At this moment, and for a little while, the balance of forces between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat seemed to be hanging on,

the struggle seemed to have arrived at a key moment when any action matters concerning to the future events.

The army went on reinforcing its positions. The government went on pledging to do this and that and the oppositional factions went on preaching democracy and tolerance as well as the need to avoid anarchy. Then came the call for the general strike "to demand democracy at once": a bourgeois attempt to recuperate at least the apparent leadership of the events, which progressed in fact towards a general refusal of work. We may compare this situation with that in Poland in 1981, when the Solidarnosc was forced - in order to protect the state and channel the radicalization of the struggles - to threaten the government with a general strike. The threat led to a vast military repression, a coup. In Poland, the same way as in Burma, the general strike declaration followed a movement that - in practice - had already refused to work and had organised strikes for a long time.

The opposition tried to recuperate and transform the struggle. But public order hadn't been restored, the proletarians refused to go home or to go back to work. After the failure of the attempts of a "soft" recuperation, the pendulum swung to the other pole: after the carrot, the stick! On 18th September General Saw Maung seized the power, and imposed curfew. The day before, in the evening, a group of insurgents had fought against army units outside of the Ministry of Com-

(3) These declarations had very little effect upon the demonstrators. No trace of quietening down, content or satisfaction was expressed.

merce. Proletarians captured soldiers who had shot at the crowd. They wanted to kill them, but "the opposition leaders intervened and pleaded for peace" (Reuter, 19/9/88). Soldiers had their life saved.

On the other hand, there were no "peaceful methods" used by the army, which had several reasons to practise the hardest repression: on the one hand, the general interest of the bourgeoisie was to put an end to the insurrectional state of the country (surely because of the possible repercussion and contagion in the neighbouring countries, or elsewhere in the world, where proletarians can easily identify their own situation with that of their brothers in Burma); on the other hand, within this general interest, the particular interest of the Burmese army was to stop the defections. According to reports, in only one week before the coup some 6000 soldiers, marines and airmen joined the insurgents.

Some other factors are also to be taken into account - factors that push the bourgeoisie to use the "heavy-handed" method: the anger of the old governing generals confronting the oppositional factions' refusal to collaborate and the necessity to put an end to the violence raging against the army, the police and all the signs of richness.

From the moment of the coup (which was a real butchery) strikes and demonstrations were banned. This coup, as well as that in Poland in 1981, was not a real change of government (in the sense of the replacement of a bourgeois faction by another one) but only a purification of the state carried out by the former local leaders because of the need to get straight to the point: to protect itself from disorder and anarchy.

General Saw Maung, chief of the military committee, who had been minister of defense in Ne Win's government (a post he took up again later) rapidly committed himself, just like Jaruzelski had done it in

Poland, to "carry on" with the reforms, democratization,... Later, the General declared that he had used the army only "in order to halt social chaos in Burma and ensure that the elections could be held". The bourgeois oppositional factions reacted to the coup with mild protests and demanded talks with Saw Maung. They rebuffed offers of support from the autonomist groups. The Buddhist monks also lent a hand, issuing a statement calling for the "dialogue" (remember the role of the church in Poland). At the same time, army patrols shot to kill without any warning when they saw any group of more than 5 people in the streets.

But the proletariat, weaker and weaker, wasn't yet defeated. On 20th September the suburb of Rangoon still put up a fierce resistance to the army. The latter could not enter the quarter, or demolish "the barricades made of cut pipes and trees. These positions were defended thanks to wooden spears, bottles of acid mixed with gravel, molotov cocktails and 'jingles' (catapults and darts)" -Liberation, 20/09/88.

The day after the coup, groups of proletarians raided police stations in Rangoon, taking rifles and ammunition. Rangoon radio spoke of a "mob" of 1000 attacking police and "killing seven policemen, including two deputy station commanders". On 21st September, three days after the coup, "the barricades of the worker suburb of Okkalapa, one of the resistance bastions, were defeated". Instantaneous executions were innumerable, and the crematoriums of the country worked day and night to wipe all traces of the slaughter as soon as possible.

We never got any news of what happened next. The blackout became complete, concerning the following events of the class struggle in Burma. But in spite of the silence, we know that violence against our class has increased, we know that the bourgeoisie, conscious of the weakening of the proletarian forces, have increased the cruelty of the white terror to an enormous extent.

7. BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

The bourgeois press has fulfilled its function: on the one hand, hiding and transforming the reality of the social movement (which from revolutionary became "student", then "democratic", etc.), on the other hand and later on, simply hiding the reality of the bourgeois terror. But beyond the horror, beyond the cannibalism of counter-revolution, above all the press tried to hide the strength of the revolution: it was very difficult for the bourgeoisie to make the proletarians in Burma leave their own terrain of struggle. The strength of the proletarian struggle determined the extent of the means the world bourgeoisie set up for repression.



the proletariat forced the bourgeoisie to develop a very strong repression immediately. But it could not isolate the most combative and radical vanguards by granting reforms and making promises. This solution would have made it possible to isolate the vanguard to massacre it and this way to crush the proletariat, repressing, torturing slaughtering it massively. For the bourgeoisie, it would have had the advantage of opposing one faction of the proletariat against other ones, of imposing its own lessons, of trying to make people believe that the repression applied by one particular sector of the bourgeoisie (the army, the fascists,...) was due to the excesses of a minority of irresponsible proletarians (hooligans, "terrorists", agent provocateur of the enemy,...). The bourgeois in Burma do not seem to have been able to arrive at this level of division of the proletarian forces.

This partial failure is very encouraging for our class and its future struggles. It means that lessons of this movement will remain alive for most of the proletarians. If it is true, these lessons will permit the movement to start again straight away or to reach a higher level of force more quickly (centralization, political clarity, refusal of divisions and reforms, knowledge of the enemy's methods and of the necessities of the revolutionary struggle, etc). Besides, it is possible, even probable, that some of the (clandestine) structures set up by the proletariat during these seven months of confrontation have slipped through the net of repression and are working to maintain the indispensable continuity between the different moments of the social confrontation, which can't do anything but develop. The proletarian movement in Burma wasn't strong enough to prevent the repression (it couldn't be in just one country), but it has probably been strong enough to slow it down, to diminish it. The bourgeoisie can only develop its repression WITHOUT LIMIT when the proletariat has lost its capacity of resistance. Facing a movement of those dimensions, the bourgeoisie was obliged to restore social peace by repression. But when the proletariat remains strong, the bourgeoisie has to prevent it from reacting against repression and must therefore modulate it, limit it.

In Burma the situation has remained quite explosive. The national economy, paralysed for months during the struggle as well as during the repression, continues to be hit by (and to contribute to) the effects of the deepening crisis of the world capitalism. There are shortages, unemployment, misery, and many proletarians have been fired for having participated in strikes. All these factors, the depth of the economic and social crisis prevent the proletarians from respecting the laws.

Although we do not say that the proletarian struggle in Burma during those months of 1988 can be considered as something of crucial importance as to the development of interclassist confrontations, it was, at the same time, an important event of class struggle

(also because of the concentration of proletarians, the proximity of China and therefore, the point of the possible contagion from one "bloc" to another,...); the exceptionally high level of confrontation between the two classes in this local case proved what we had already said many times before: There is not ONE centre of the revolution that should be the reference or the leadership, the guide for the struggles everywhere else.

These divisions between "developed" and "underdeveloped" countries, between socialist or non-socialist, between "aggressive" and "less aggressive" countries, etc. are based on moralist, progressist and racist conceptions. They only divide the world proletariat and slow down its struggle. As many times in other periods and in other places, the proletariat in Burma has proved that there is only one working class and only one way to make its (our) revolutionary project triumph. The world proletariat doesn't draw strength from those who give lessons, or from the experiences of the "mature proletariat" of this or that area, but indeed from its own practical struggle against the bourgeoisie to re-appropriate its own history.

Instead of looking for privileged areas and dividing the proletariat by this way, it is much more important to understand that the emergence of our class and of its vanguard everywhere in the world is historically and universally determined by the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

The development of the social confrontation, when it becomes acute as in Burma, tends to revolve around the question of the military confrontation. This question is essential for the proletariat because it is forced to turn the weapons of the criticism into the criticism by the weapons (to prevent the cannibalism of counter-revolution), as it involves the danger of the social confrontation to be transformed into militarist interbourgeois confrontation. In order to satisfy its needs and to defend itself, the proletariat in Burma was capable of retaliating by the arms against the bourgeoisie. It undertook the military confrontation and the preparation against the police in a more and more global and general way. Thus organized and armed structures were created for the self defence of workers' areas, for the attack of state buildings, for the looting and re-appropriations. It is important to stress the numerous attempts of the proletariat to organize itself. Through the information that have filtered, it seems evident that structures like that emerged. Of course, according to its Machiavellian vision of history, the bourgeoisie always talks of one unique centre of subversion, but it seems, that on the contrary, these structures were and remained strongly decentralised (we regret it but understand it very well). On the one hand, it can be explained by the will to resist the extremely violent repression, but, on the other hand, it scatters the proletariat and slows down its tendency to constitute into one unique centralized force.

So, not having forgotten the lessons of the past, the proletarians in Burma put forward the necessity to organize and protect themselves very quickly. But this vigilance against repression, expressing a level of understanding the real nature of the antagonism, must be surpassed by structuring different levels of contacts and centralization to reinforce the struggle by giving it a unique leadership. If, at the beginning, it's mostly the homogeneity of living conditions, the starvation,... which determined the quick development and extension of the struggles, very quickly, attempts to generalize the movement, making contacts between different towns appeared. It is highly probable that those structures played a role in the refusal of the solutions the bourgeoisie proposed.

Tens of structures were set up, militants went to ask the militants of the previous struggles to give them advice on what the necessities of the struggle are. Many of these newly created groups were opposed to China, to the USA, to Cuba, USSR,... considering them all alike, as they are in fact, even if sometimes, still under the influence of nationalism, these groups stressed the "will for independence of the Burmese people" as the reason for their opposition (4).

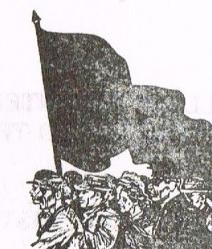
During the violent workers' uprisings that burst out recently (Algeria, Venezuela, Morocco, Tunisia, Mexico,...) the proletariat confronted the bourgeois repressive forces - armed with machine guns and armoured cars - with stones, knives and sticks as their only weapons. In Burma it was different: partly due to the continuity they were able to give to their struggles, the proletarians had drawn lessons and refused to let themselves be slaughtered, disarmed. First, proletarians used home-made weapons, then, whilst the movement was developing, they showed that the bourgeoisie would not have to disarm bleating sheep but proletarians fighting, determined to defend their struggle. This

determination as well as the large number of deaths in the ranks of the army pushed a lot of soldiers (proletarians wearing a uniform) to refuse to assassinate their brothers, to desert, to struggle against the state.

This permitted the proletarians to get more weapons and increased the destabilization of the state. But, if it is clear that the proletarian struggle destabilized the army to an extent that soldiers confronted other soldiers, nevertheless, this destabilization was never deep enough to really threaten the state. To reach that level the struggle must overpass a lot of limits, and, for example, practically and directly internationalize itself, knocking about ideologies such as the "bad management", the false opposition between "socialism" and capitalism, the "specifically national" problems, etc.

On the other hand, during their struggle against the state and its repression, the proletarians did not only refuse to confront the state with bare fists, they chose the targets according to their/our needs : the needs of our struggle. They also systematically refused to go where all the forces of opposition, all the ex-members of the regime, the monks... wanted them to go, that is to say : to confront the machine guns of the army. Such a refusal expresses the change from a reaction against misery to an organized action against the whole society, and it also undoubtably expresses a step forward for the proletariat. But it is very difficult to give a continuity to it because of the isolation of the proletarians in Burma. This is the reason why the bourgeoisie has been able to transform the social confrontation into a purely militaristic interbourgeois confrontation, a terrain on which the bourgeoisie is of course dominant today. In the course of such a development those who gradually take the lead of the movement against its own interests are the "military specialists": armed groups for national liberation, guerrilla groups, etc.

December 1988.



(4) It is almost sure that, just as the opposition campaigns and the slaughters by the government, the autonomist and guerrilla groups participated in the crushing of the movement, recuperating for themselves the militants who managed to escape from repression. Enrolled as they are, those militants deviate their hatred for the bourgeoisie into the hatred for the governing faction and wage war against the latter. Separatist groups lead astray the armed struggle of our class towards an interbourgeois militaristic fight for the national autonomy of this or that piece of land.

KOMMUNIZMUS

The first issue of the central review of the ICG in Hungarian

In July 1991, our group published the first issue of the new central review of the ICG in Hungarian. In conformity with our other central reviews, the title of this review is **KOMMUNIZMUS** (Communism), and its subtitle is "Dictatorship of the proletariat for the abolition of wage labour". **KOMMUNIZMUS** will be released twice a year (in spring and in autumn).

This new publication of the **Internationalist Communist Group (ICG)** is a factor and a product of the activity of our group in the region called "Eastern Europe". Hungarian is a language spoken by relatively few people: 10 million in Hungary, 3-4 million in the neighbouring countries - Russia/Ukrania, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Austria -, another million dispersed all over the world from the USA to Australia, to which some more million should be added for whom Hungarian is not the native language but who speak this language due to family links and friendship. In spite of the dispersion of people speaking Hungarian, this language is a means of communication among proletarians in a big region where the open confrontation between bourgeoisie and proletariat is becoming more and more important.

In the regions mentioned above, the communist

publications were practically nonexistent since the 20's. So besides the necessity of having a central review in a language which is directly or indirectly accessible for the majority of militants, sympathizers and contacts of the ICG in Eastern Europe, and besides the fact that this review represents a new step in the framework of the efforts of our international and internationalist group to reinforce the organic centralisation of the proletarian struggle even in this period of victorious counterrevolution, **KOMMUNIZMUS** fulfills a historical function as the first concretisation in the region, in the form of a review, of the reemergence of the organized, conscious and voluntary action of the avant-garde of the proletariat fighting against Capital.

Of course, the publication of this review is only a small step forward in this gigantic fight, and the ICG is determined to give a continuity to the efforts made in this direction. In this sense, the **structures of the ICG in Eastern Europe** prepare texts in other important languages of the region (mainly in Russian and in German). Our group is planning the publication of the "Thesis of Programmatical Orientation" soon in Hungarian and in Russian, and later we intend to publish the first texts in German.

WE CALL ON THE INTERNATIONALIST REVOLUTIONARIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS IMPORTANT HISTORICAL TASK.

READ, DISTRIBUTE, KOMMUNIZMUS!!!

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DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT FOR

COMMUNISM

THE ABOLITION OF WAGE LABOUR



Koith - I wondered
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be of interest for
Here & Now?

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DIRECT ACTION AND INTERNATIONALISM!
AIDS, PURE PRODUCT OF SCIENCE!
THE BEAST OF PROPERTY (J. MOST)

JULY 1993
N°8

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Central review in English of the Internationalist Communist Group

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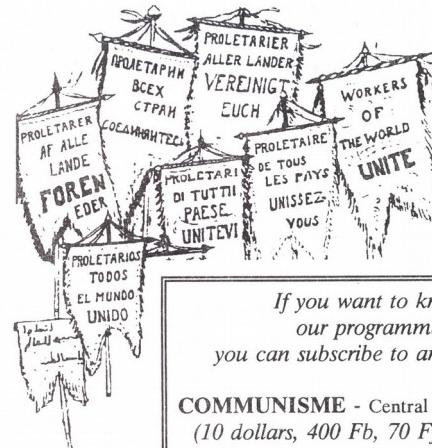
COMRADES

This review is produced by militants whose first language is not English. We arranged for comrades and sympathizers to translate the texts for this review because we see the necessity for internationalism. We are fully aware that there remain various mistakes and imperfections. It is up to you to help us make the next issue better in both content and form.

We badly need English language documents, books, reviews,... on the communist movement to help write and translate articles. We ask our readers to contact us if they wish to give or exchange such titles (e.g. for similar French texts).

CENTRAL ADDRESS

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WARNING

We wish to thank B.Vandomme, who, as "chief editor" of this review allows us to legally publish and circulate our press. Nevertheless, this person does not answer politically for the content and the positions expressed in our press.

On the other hand, the responsibility and the production of our articles are the result of a collective activity - this is the reason why the articles are not signed. They are the expression of a class that lives and struggles to destroy wage-labour and therefore all exploitation. all classes.

-The editorial staff-

We are reproducing here an article that was first published 10 years ago, in November 1983, in the first issue of *Communism*, our central review in English. Two reasons have led us to republish this article on the "Myth of Democratic Rights and Liberties":

- * the contents of the article that remains very crucial in all struggles today insofar as it denounces the democratic rights and liberties as they are systematically being used against the strength, the unity and the autonomous organisation of the proletariat;
- * the fact that this article, published in the first issue of *Communism*, was a rather bad translation of the original Spanish text, while today we can publish a much better version of it. As we explained in the introduction of *Communism* n°7 in April 1992, we depend nearly entirely on our contacts and sympathizers to help us with the translations of our texts into English. We are satisfied that today we can republish this article and we call upon our sympathizers to continue to contribute to the task of improving the quality of our reviews and of spreading important text of the communist movement.

Against the Myth of Democratic Rights and Liberties

"To delegate is to give up any possibility of direct action. The so-called 'supremacy' of democratic laws is nothing but an abdication, mostly for the benefit of rascals"

Battaglia Communista - 1951.

The proletariat, in its tendency to organize itself as an autonomous class, needs to meet, to develop its press, to unite, to carry on strikes, to occupy factories, to organize direct action, to liberate confined comrades, to get arms. These tasks have been assumed with different results in all bourgeois periods of its historic fight, independent of the type of bourgeois domination: Bonapartist or parliamentary, republican or fascist.

The bourgeoisie's policy toward the proletariat consists in showing these needs as identical to all democratic institutions and liberties (free press, free association, amnesty,...). It is not only the classical liberal bourgeois who try to convince us that democracy is the best, but also all the pseudo-working-class parties (socialist, Stalinist, Trotskyist,...) which base their counter-revolutionary policy on the statement that the working-class will reach socialism through the conquest and the defence of all those rights and liberties.

In fact, there is a basic opposition between the mass of bourgeois democratic liberties and the needs of the proletariat to get organized on its own class field. The positions the proletariat conquers in this field can never be confused with so-called "working-class liberties".

In the same way as two opposite classes exist, there are two fundamental conceptions of workers' struggle. One is bourgeois, where one criticizes the lack of equality, of democracy, where one should fight for more rights and liberties. The other is proletarian, based on an understanding of the fact that the roots of all those liberties, rights and equalities are essentially of anti-worker type. This leads to the total practical destruction of the democratic State with its equality, rights and liberties. These two opposite conceptions show the contradiction between, on one hand, passive criticism - to improve, reform, and in this way, rein-

force the exploitation system - and, on the other hand, active criticism, our criticism - the destruction of that exploitation system.

When the "right" tells us that the "left" is dictatorial and anti-democratic, that when the "left" reaches the government it does not respect the human rights and that our interest is therefore to wave the flag of democracy, to fight under its protection for pure democracy, is it a myth or do they have an objective interest in democracy? When the "left" tells us in the name of "Marxism" that the "bourgeoisie" and "capitalism" do not respect democratic liberties, that we have to defend them against fascist attacks, that we have to crave them wherever they do not exist, that this is the way to socialism, is it only a mass of opportunistic slogans or are they really fighting for democracy?

The bourgeoisie always tried to use the proletariat (taken as atomized workers, as "citizen") as a social basis, as slaves to serve its own dominant class interests. In this way, we already understand how the

bourgeoisie always tries to make the workers fight for a different interest than their own (this partly answers the question). But do the bourgeoisie of left and right want democracy or not? The tale of liberties and human rights, is it only a mystification without any material basis or is there an objective reality that produces this democratic mystification? Do we have to infer that no bourgeois faction has any interest in having these rights and liberties of the citizens applied? (The corollary of this would be that the proletariat could avoid the bourgeoisie's domination if it really fought for the defence of democracy). Or do we have to conclude to the contrary that the fight of capitalists for the paradise of democratic rights is really the supreme will of the bourgeoisie.

Of course, the revolutionary marxist criticism we develop here is based on this last thesis: the mass of human rights and liberties correspond exactly to the ideal form of the reproduction of capitalist oppression. Let's see what this ideal form of democracy is and where it comes from.

The paradise of human rights and liberties

The party of order, the general party of Capital, or in other words, all the bourgeois parties, is totally unable to face the proletariat organized as a class and therefore as a party. This is why that main secret of capitalist domination is to stop the organization of the proletariat as an autonomous force and there is nothing more efficient for the bourgeoisie than the mass of human rights and liberties to drown the working-class, to dissolve it in the false concept of the "people". When the proletariat stops existing as a class, when each worker is a good citizen, with his liberties, rights and duties, he accepts all the rules of the game that atomize him and drown him in the mass where his specific class interests disappear. As a good citizen, he does not exist as a class, this is the condition for democracy to work.

But the reign of democracy as both "left" and "right" promise in the name of socialism and/or liberty, where there would be no classes but just citizens and free people, like any ideological form of the bourgeoisie does not come from nowhere and does not remain just as a pure idea outside the real world. On one hand, this world, "earthly paradise" of human rights, obeys a very precise material reality: the reign of the circulation of commodities from which all the defenders of Capital draw their principles and conclusions; on the other hand, all the mental forms, ideologies, which derives from this reign are accepted by society and are therefore objective. The dissolution of the working-class in the dead world of citizenship is nothing immaterial,

even if it is based on the mystical world of commodities. One could think that the millions of pages written by marxologists and other capitalist lawyers,... the capitalist State constitutions, the charts, the speeches,... only passively serve the bourgeoisie, that it takes them into account or not according to circumstances. But this vision forgets that these very papers reflect and strengthen reality, that they belong to dominant ideology, which becomes a material force that reinforces and reproduces the whole social system. The laws and other official papers are just ideological products of capitalist dictatorship which have the task of defending it.

In the sphere of circulating commodities there are no classes; everybody is a citizen, everybody appears as a buyer and seller of commodities, equal, free, and owner. Even when we sell our labour-power, we are in the paradise of human rights and liberties. Each one is aiming at his own private interests in the reign of equality, liberty, and private property.

Liberty: because the buyer and the seller of commodities (including labour-power) does not obey any rule than their own free will.

Equality: because in the world of commodities, everybody is a buyer and a seller, and everybody gets a value equal to the value contained in the commodities he is selling, exchanging equivalent against equivalent.

Property: because each one appears, in the world of exchange as an owner of his commodity and he can only dispose of what belongs to him.

As free and equal owners, all citizens contract relationships giving rise to a natural brotherhood, which is the lawful reflection that guarantees liberties, equality and the identical possibility for each man to own commodities. Any buying or selling of commodity is the result of free will, a contract between men who, because of commodity, are owners, free, equal and like brothers.

It is this fetishised world of commodities, where there is no place for classes but only for men and citizens, that brings about the rights and liberties that enable them to decide on the regulation and improvement of this world. It is not only authorized to vote and to choose as a citizen, but it is also possible to have one's delegates in democratic organs for which the liberty of gathering, press, association, expression, etc. are guaranteed. The citizens can associate as electors and elected (in the bourgeois parties) or as buyers and sellers of commodity (in the trade-unions). Nothing is more natural for the citizens than to found political parties, to try to work in the government, in the ministries, the parliaments, or the "soviets". No need for any nobility certificate as a citizen, anyone, whatever his social position (of which the laws never speak) can become a deputy, a minister or a president. In the same way, as buyers or sellers of commodities, they can associate, form unions, refuse to buy or sell if the deal is not good enough. To this corresponds another mass of rights and liberties as the ones which rule private societies and the pseudo-workers' trade-unions. The buyers and sellers of labour-power, associated as such (never as workers or as capitalists, since nobody owns anybody else's work in the world of circulation of commodities) can even interrupt the delivery of the use-value: it is the liberty of strike. In the same way, the citizen who buys this commodity can decide to buy another one, it is the liberty of work. Or the citizen can decide to stop buying this commodity: it is the liberty of industry (under this reign, there is no lock-out). Let us not forget the rights of prisoners, nor general amnesty, which can only exist on condition that everybody behaves himself as a good citizen, a good buyer and a good seller, as "Amnesty International" and other humanists say.

Some people will point out that nowhere such rights and liberties can be found, that everywhere there are prisoners, everywhere the right to strike is limited, that in this country the right of property is limited and

that in that country only one party is allowed, etc. All this is obvious. Nevertheless, in all these countries, there is a faction of the bourgeoisie that will criticize the lack of democracy of different governments, and to do so, it must have a democratic ideal as reference. This is exactly what we want to explain and denounce.

It is the only way to break with the bourgeois criticism of democracy and to recognize the enemy in all the defenders of a pure and perfect democracy. Indeed, as well as democracy being the product and the reflection of the mercantile basis of capitalist society, it is also the reference of all bourgeois criticisms which only aim at correcting the imperfections of democracy and where all the forces of counter-revolution concentrate in periods of revolutionary crisis.

But is it possible that the bourgeois ideology could really imagine such a society, where there would be no prisoners because no-one would steal because no worker's group would organize itself, where any strike would be strictly legal, where any association would group buyers and sellers to make sure the commodities would be exchanged at the right price? Of course, yes. More than two hundred years ago the democrats had no problem in recognizing that the democratic republic should correspond to the "people of gods" as Rousseau said. Today the bourgeoisie, in its decomposition, is still unable to understand the limits of its historical perspective and holds on to its mystical ideas. If it found the need and the capacity to integrate all the religion it used to fight yesterday in the name of science, how can we doubt that it does not "honestly" long for the democratic paradise it has always fought for?

Man imagines god as a perfect image of himself, purified from all his contradictions. Capital imagines a perfect and everlasting reign because it is convinced that it is the positive pole of society, also purified from its contradictions (wealth/misery, growth/obstacles to the development of productive forces, "development"/"under-development", equality/oppression). It sees itself as identical to its positive pole (wealth, growth, equality, liberty, democracy,...) For example, it has a completely a-historical and mystical conception of the valorization of Capital, as if it could exist without periodical massive destructions of social productive forces. Even if it calls itself socialism or communism, Capital always builds its own categories, its own analysis, its own vision of the world, ignoring the unity and the deadly contradiction between wage-labour and Capital. One can therefore not be surprised that in this democratic world, no one is exploited, no one is imprisoned, that one can find only capital, wealth, equality, justice, growth and liberty.



The contradictory unity of reality

Let us now leave the world of ideas and of capitalist categories, of circulation and of citizenship, and let us return to the everyday world, the one of production and of Capital's valorization. The seller of labour-power is a worker, whether he believes in god or in democracy. In the factory he is nobody's equal, he is free of nothing, owner of nothing, not even of what he manipulates. If he wants, the worker can imagine that his citizenship is only interrupted, that his equalities, liberties and properties have been left in the cloakroom and that he will get them back when he gets out. But he is completely wrong. In his eight (or more) hours of work, he consumes raw material and machines to produce use-value that remains the property of Capital and in the other sixteen hours, during his holidays, he consumes food, beer, football or television to produce another use-value: his labour-power, which will be used in valorizing Capital. Outside of the mystical and ephemeral paradise of circulation and of free elections, the worker remains a worker, whether he likes it or not; even when he fucks (whether by pleasure or to produce a family) he is only a labour-power that valorizes Capital. As such, he is neither equal, nor free, nor citizen, nor owner at any moment of his life. He is only a paid slave. Even before he tries to organize himself to defend his worker's interests, he has already all equality, property and liberty against him.

But to penetrate the real meaning of the mass bourgeois rights and liberties, one must not only shift from the circulation sphere to the production sphere (in their contradictory unity) but also reach the essence of the class contradictions in the society. In this way we understand that the first liberty of the proletariat is to be free from all property. In fact, the ancestors of the proletariat have been liberated by physical violence of any other property than that of their children and of their own labour-power. This liberty of all properties is the most important one. It determines all the other ones. Thanks to this liberty the proletariat is only free to sell his labour-power, but also free to die of hunger (he and his children), if he does not find a buyer. The equality under the reign of circulation of commodities gives the worker the right to receive a value equal to the one of his labour-power and it is precisely this equality that takes away from him the product of his own work and warrants capitalist exploitation. Brotherhood is not a meaningless bourgeois slogan. It means, practically, the brotherhood of the bourgeois against the proletariat; under the form of national and democratic fraternity, it helps in tying the hands and feet of

workers to their exploiters and bringing them to the massacre of their class-brothers on imperialist battle-fields.

True liberty, property and fraternity of democracy implies therefore a permanent situation of anti-proletarian violence. Repression is one of the indispensable elements of imposition, reproduction and extension of democracy. A long time ago, Marx used to denounce the sacred trinity "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" as equivalent to "Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery". Even more, the tendency to reach the paradise of pure democracy - where no one would complain of this liberty, equality, fraternity, property - implies a higher level of realization of democracy, which also implies the full use of the terror machine of the democratic State in its various forms. Therefore, for example, there is no organic change between the liberal and the fascist form of State, but only a process of purification of the State in its tendency to reach an inaccessible democracy.

Let us examine some other democratic rights and liberties. The right of election means that every 4, 5, 6, 7,... years, the worker can dress as a citizen to go and choose his oppressors freely. That supposes of course, on one hand a free electoral campaign, that means the liberty for each bourgeois faction to invest in it following its means and, on the other hand, the liberty for others to imagine that society might change with the coming of such or such party at the head of the bourgeois government. The so-called rights and liberties even give the workers the "privilege" to choose between the self-named "worker parties": to choose the one that will be the most capable of directing the State of Capital and to organize the massacre of the proletarians who would tend to ignore the directives of the big "worker" parties and who would refuse what the majority has decided.

The liberty of press and propaganda simply insures the free market in such a way that only the economic potential and the financial capacity of the different parties would assume the control and domination of public opinion and would guarantee the free application of the majority principle. In front of this economico-political apparatus of the dominant class, the workers have as alternative: either the liberty, right and duty to resign themselves, or the force and the will to organize themselves as a class, for which no right or liberty will ever be conceded.



The so-called "workers' liberties"

"We theoretically agree that democracy is the domination system of bourgeoisie" so would the socialists, the Stalinists, the Trotskyists, etc. answer: "but what we must do now is to fight for the rights and liberties that serve the organization of the working-class: the right of association, of union action, of strike, of amnesty for political prisoners... wherever these rights do not exist, and to defend them each time fascism attacks them". "What you don't understand," they would say, "is that we cannot fight for socialism without these rights."

Evidently, all these capitalist parties generally hide that "theory" - until last Judgement Day when they will all brandish it again - but let us examine the practice of the rights and liberties contained in the program these so-called parties call "minimum" or "transitional" (of all these rights we will only examine those that are supposed to be "workers' rights").

"The rights of reunion, of association, of unionism, the liberty of press are rights granted to the workers, they are conquests of the working-class"

So speaks the bourgeoisie (of left and right). After having produced value everyday for Capital, wearing out their force, their arms, their brains, their sweat, their blood,... their lives, the workers do not only have the right to go and watch football or get drunk at the bar to divert themselves, to be in a good shape and be good at work the next day, but also, the bourgeoisie gives them the right to discuss, to unionize and to send "delegates" to negotiate the price at which they will sell themselves. It is very logical that a seller tries to sell his commodity at high price and Capital admits that the trade-unions change unreasonable claims of the workers into "righteous salary claims". These "righteous claims" are those that permit an increase in the exploitation rate, big enough to compensate the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. And it is even considered "legitimate" by all the bourgeoisie as long as it does not touch the national economy. There is no doubt that the trade-unions are the best specialists to formulate these "rights" and "legitimate" claims that do not hit the profit of Capital.

What else can we find in these rights granted by the bourgeoisie? NOTHING, absolutely nothing more.

In front of a real workers' association defending the workers' interests, fighting for a real reduction of work time, for a real increase in relative wages, Capital has no interest in accepting the right of association, of reunion, of press, of unionization, because these rights would necessarily attack the profit rate and the national economy. And then, democracy would not have any other alternative than to use its cops, union troops,...

The parties never hesitate in using white terror against the workers' class movement, and always in the name of democracy and liberty, of the right to work, of the respect of the trade-union's decisions... Without any doubt, the same thing will happen every time the workers' association will become a school for communism, every time the question of socialism will stop being a question of words and a struggle will be carried on, not only for the increase in wages, but for the abolition of wage-labour.

It must be very clear that workers' associations, their press, their reunions and actions,... that are based solely on the immediate and historical interests of the proletariat, must fight openly against Capital and its national economy. And in the name of the respect of legal unions, of the struggle against subversion, of unity against provocateurs, of the defence of national security, these so-called liberties are precisely what will be used as a repressive force against the class organizations.

And this practice is very coherent with democracy. Repression is democratic because it strikes when the workers leave their uniform of citizenship to act as a class, when they stop accepting being a well disciplined army for the valorization of Capital, for which the bourgeoisie had given them these rights and liberties.

This proves that contrary to what the bourgeoisie says, no right is granted to the working-class when it acts as a class. These rights are only granted to citizens, sellers of commodities. Repression of all those who do not accept to behave as good citizens is the logical answer to the bourgeois desire for a democratic paradise. There is no democratic paradise for those who do not respect democracy. As soon as the proletariat organises as a class, tries to attack the Capital dictatorship, democracy shows its terrorist face; as long as its dictatorship holds on firmly, democracy can show its liberal face to the stupid mass. The nice face of rights and liberties is therefore reserved only for the citizen, the one who bows down peacefully in front of the daily violence of the capitalist production system: wage-labour.

The same thing happens with the right to strike. The left wing of the bourgeoisie tells us that it is antagonistic to the capitalist juridical superstructure. No right is ever given to the class, to the workers in their struggle, they are only given to the sellers of commodities. As long as workers continue to accept simply being a force for Capital's valorization they have all the rights to act as any seller of commodities: to claim the right value for their commodity, to refuse to sell, to stop delivering use-value, etc. And of course, on the

other hand, we find the rights of the buyer: the liberty of work (which means unemployment, strikebreaking, lock out, etc.)... With this liberty, workers are the ones who remain everyday more exploited, and more enslaved.

And when they make a true strike without caring for any right or liberty, when they really attack the bourgeois interests, no right or liberty exists any more; they are accused of being provocateurs, or agents coming from abroad,..., the true class strike is declared illegal, wildcat, anti-union,...which in fact it is. Consciously or not, any class struggle fights against the legality of the reign of commodity and fights for its destruction.

And to do so, it cannot accept workers behaving like sheep, nor scabs, nor unions, nor the right to work, nor the right to strike. On the battlefield, when the workers use direct action against the trade-unions at the service of Capital, they have no right at all. One must be blind or naive to believe that the legalization of strikes, which does not come from us but from our enemies, gives us any guarantee of winning or protects us against State repression. On the contrary, the legalization of strikes is a way for the bourgeoisie to reduce the class strength of strikes.

Another example is the "amnesty for political prisoners" requested by Amnesty as well as by all the social-democrats, pacifists, Trotskyists, humanists, priests of any imperialist side, but only at the condition they are made prisoners by a State of the other imperialist side. Each State keeps its own prisoners and, at the same time, asks for the liberation of its neighbour's in the name, of course, of human rights.. Besides, the humanists only claim to care for political prisoners at a time when international conventions such as the "European Juridical Space" relegate all actions of proletarian violence to the rank of "common law delinquency".

The height of their campaign, is that they all - committees for Chilean, Argentinean, Salvadorian exiles, support groups for RAF, the IRA, etc. - aim at getting the signatures of humanist social-democracies such as the German one, which does not retain many political prisoners since it has already eliminated most of them one by one. And just as in any imperialist war, each State is ready to negotiate some human flesh against investments or commodities. And they keep talking about "amnesty" and "human rights". In this obvious trade of human flesh, the bourgeoisie cleverly puts together all prisoners, concealing the class character of the imprisonment of our comrades who were caught while fighting the bourgeois State. When a junta gets evicted, when a new president takes office, when such or such a party wins the elections, then they allow a "wide popular amnesty". And they pretend that the best way to show solidarity with our imprisoned comrades would be to collect signatures from democrats, to

participate -by sending donations and telegrams- in the campaigns organised by "Amnesty", the parties, the parliamentary governments,... We know that all this confusion is the exact opposite to the solidarity needed by all our imprisoned comrades. The only solidarity is class solidarity, which does not exist through humanist speeches, nor through the game of human rights on the side of the USA, the USSR or Cuba and which cannot be obtained by protest letters addressed to capitalist butchers asking them to torture a little bit less. But it exists through the struggle against the bourgeoisie in each country. Only the direct action of the working-class with its own means (strikes, sabotage of the national production,...) will allow to impose its strength, to liberate the present workers who are imprisoned, but also to lay down the basis to organize class power, the proletarian dictatorship that will blow away the history of all States and all prisoners.

As with all other rights and liberties, the legal amnesty has nothing to do with workers' struggle to free comrades from jails, because as long as the capitalist exploitation system lasts, there will be prisoners and particularly, proletarian prisoners. One must not only know that there is no legal guarantee against prison and torture, but also that prison and torture will always be used in the name of the defence of these rights and liberties. In the same way that, under capitalism, every worker is potentially unemployed, any worker who does not accept the rules of the citizenship game is, potentially, a prisoner. Repression, torture, murder are only applications of democracy.

Moreover, the meaning of an amnesty is that the prisoners are "forgiven" for what they did. That means of course that they would deny the actions for which they have been condemned, or at least, that they would express that the actions that were valid yesterday are no longer valid today. In this way, the amnesty allows, in the name of "christian forgiveness", the recuperation of actions that, originally, attacked the bourgeois State, and became, with the coming of another bourgeois faction to the government, "actions that are exaggerated but understandable within the struggle against dictatorship..."

A good example of this is the amnesty conceded by the "Young Spanish Democracy". It forgave some "antifascist militants" above all in order to hide the fact that many imprisoned workers were fighting at the same time against Franco and against his antifascist cousins: in one word, against the whole bourgeois State. Some of the "anarchists", of the "incontrolados", are still in the prisons that became "democratic" again.

For us, the liberation of our imprisoned class comrades can only be made by reclaiming their heroic actions. We do not hope for any grace or pity from a class that shows us daily that it never hesitates in accumulating millions of dead bodies to develop its

civilization. We know that only our organized and armed force can pull our comrades out of the fascist and antifascist prisons. And this is true, precisely because our force is the continuation of these actions for which our comrades fell. This is why, not only do we not ask for an amnesty, but to the contrary, we claim the reasons for which they have been imprisoned. K Marx held this position when he answered to his judges:

"We do not ask for any excuse nor any pity; do not expect any from us tomorrow."

In front of Capital, all proletarians are subversive. The fact of refusing to submit to its law means, consciously or unconsciously, fighting for its destruction. This is why, with all the victims of Capital ("political" or "of common law"), we say:

"We are all subversive. We are all guilty of wanting to destroy this inhuman world"

For all these reasons, the communist position on press, strikes, association, amnesty, liberties, about legality, is to assert without doubt that the organization of the proletariat is based on no right, no law, no liberty conceded by its enemy but on the contrary, is based on illegal action: the revolutionary organization for the destruction of wage-slavery. As Marx said:

"We never kept this secret: the field on which we fight is not the legal one, but the revolutionary one"

That does not mean that we abandon a strike when it becomes legal, or that we do not publish and distribute revolutionary press when it can circulate legally or that we refuse to get out of prison when a judge sets us free. That would simply be reacting antithetically on the same legal field.

One must not identify illegality and clandestinity. Any real strike is illegal but not clandestine, even if there are secret preparations for it. The organization of workers in class movements - revolutionary councils, soviets,... stands on a completely illegal basis but develops public activities. The best example of this is the destruction of the bourgeois army by the proletariat. When the soldiers unify with the rest of the working-class, after a long work of communist secret propaganda, when they start using their weapons against the officers and destroy the capitalist army, they do not do it in a secret way, but openly, though it is the most illegal action one can imagine. To fight on the illegal field means assuming all tasks independently of all democratic rights and liberties, which are only decisions of our enemy and therefore a strategy of the bourgeoisie to fight us.

Correlation of forces between classes and juridical formalization of an unavoidable situation

Let us listen once more to the lawyers of Capital:

"We are Marxists and we know very well that all these rights are bourgeois democratic rights, but the bourgeoisie is incapable of conceding them or maintaining them, we must impose them and obtain them by force. We must fight today for the right to strike, for the constituent assembly, for the amnesty of political prisoners, the liberty of association, of election, of press, etc."

Some others will say that:

"One must fight for the autonomy of the working class to carry on the permanent revolution"

or that *"it is only a step"*

Have we ever seen a class that could stay autonomous, that could fight for its own class interests, while

fighting at the same time for the purification of democracy, in other words for the interests of its class enemies? This question finds no answer from the Trotskyists and the Stalinists. In their democratic vision of history the proletariat would not be the first class of history to be at the same time exploited and revolutionary, but rather the least autonomous and most servile class of all history. While in their past revolts the slaves used to attack the slavery system and their masters, the serfs used to attack all medieval institutions, the church and the lords; these "Marxists" say that the proletariat should struggle for bourgeois purposes, with bourgeois means to prepare its own revolution!

But what is the relation between a proletarian advance and the concession of such or such a right or liberty by the bourgeoisie?

Let us take an example: the situation in Argentina in 1973. For years, glorious workers' struggles took the

prisoners out of their jails. At the same moment, the "bureaucratic" and "anti-bureaucratic" Peronists, the Trotsko-Morenists of the PST asked the workers to wait for the amnesty order, without knowing if it included the grave delinquency (crimes, offenses,...) cases. The workers' struggle emptied Villa Devoto and permitted many comrades to re-enter the struggle. How should we interpret these facts? For the classical bourgeois parties, the coming out of prisoners is always a consequence of what they legally concede; for those bourgeois parties that call themselves "workers' parties", it is the opposite: the amnesty orders are the great workers' victory. Both kind of bourgeois parties agree to characterize the juridical formalization as fundamental. There is a difference between these two tendencies, but they are both tendencies of the same class: the bourgeoisie. They only disagree on the way to kill the workers' movement, to integrate it democratically and to justify juridically the situation.

But for all communist revolutionaries, on the contrary, the victory is not to obtain decrees but expresses itself in the organisative fortification of our class, in the practical affirmation of its autonomy and in the fact that the prisoners could join their class brothers in the street. What about the amnesty? It is only a juridical manoeuvre of the bourgeoisie to try to integrate in its democratic legality what is happening in the streets and that it can not avoid any longer. Its aim is obvious: to turn a situation that is favourable to its historical enemy to its own advantage. The coming out of prisoners is disguised in amnesty by means of its juridical formalization.

There is the same opposition between the right of press and the existence of an autonomous workers' press. In general the liberty of press guarantees the liberty of undertaking and the financial aspect is predominant. But in certain circumstances, the liberty of press can be extended to the workers' press as long as the latter does not have much influence and that, through its free circulation, it can be controlled by the bourgeoisie. But in a world where everything is commodity, where everything tends to dissolve in the world of exchange, of money or consumption, let us not have any illusion: the workers' press will never develop on that ground.

The same thing happens with the right to strike. Let us leave aside the well-known case of strikes that do not attack the profit rate of the bourgeoisie. A strike is only recognized legally when the bourgeoisie is in a weak position and has no other solution to try to break a strike than to legalize it. Both cases are bound but any way, legalization never brings anything new to the proletariat in its struggle. Its force is only its organized and conscious force, before and after legalization.

Another question for those so-called "Marxists" to think about: for what other reason would the bourgeoisie give any right to its historical enemy (the proletariat)?

If it were true that these rights and liberties would help the revolution, why hasn't there been any revolution in the countries that have a long democratic tradition, in the U.S.A. for example? Why did it develop in Russia, which had known centuries of Tsarism and only a few months of "democracy"? And why did it burst out in the most "democratic" regime of the whole Russian history, the one of the social-democrat Kerensky? On what rights and liberties could the workers in Iran rely to defend their strikes and their struggle of 1978/79? In what way did the acknowledgement of the "Solidarity" union in Poland help the workers' movement to develop and extend? Didn't it happen precisely to recuperate the movement by taking it away from its anti-capitalist and therefore internationalist and autonomous aims to deviate it on the reform and democratization of the exploitation system, with the blessing of both the Pope and Brezhnev?

Why shouldn't we ask the right of insurrection? There is an answer to all these questions, and it concerns the material class' interests that are antagonistic to the interests of the proletariat. In fact it is quite normal that the democratic right or left bourgeoisie would try to impose its own "human rights" and would make no distinction between amnesty and liberation of prisoners, the right of strike and the strike, the right of press and the existence of a workers' press. The heart of all this mystification is to consider the juridical formalization as a workers' victory while it is nothing but a weapon of the bourgeoisie.

Two ways of interpreting history

To defend its interests, the bourgeoisie needs to interpret history in its own way. It always tells us that we do not know history, that the working-class has always struggled to obtain the right to vote, to strike,...

All the so-called workers' parties reduce the history of proletarian struggles to a question of conquests of democratic rights in the aim of justifying their past, present and future actions.

These servants of Capital refuse to see the class antagonisms and the specific interests of the working-class. They use the slogans of the masses which are still submitted to the dominant ideology to prove that workers have always fought for pure democracy and in this way, they kill a second time the millions of workers "democratically" slaughtered throughout the history of struggles. In doing so, they try to justify their functions as deputies in the bourgeois State apparatus. But one must replace the facts on their real basis (i.e. the immediate and historical interests of the proletariat which are strictly opposite to the ones of the bourgeoisie), all these struggles aim at destroying class society, whatever the momentary consciousness of the workers who live these struggles could be.

"It does not matter much what a worker, or even the whole proletariat, imagines he is aiming at. What matters is what he is really and historically obliged to do" (Marx)

We do not care about the flags that float over the struggles, we care only about the enormous efforts of the proletariat to organize itself and fight the bourgeoisie. Therefore it is very logical that while so-called "Marxists" consider that universal suffrage is a conquest of the proletariat, we consider that any reform of the State is a way to perfect the domination methods of the bourgeoisie. The only true conquests of the working class are its experience (in struggle) and its growing autonomy and power of organization. What remains of its struggles is the political conclusions that worker (proletarian) minorities can draw from their history. It is only through this "workers' memory" carried by

minorities that the movement can avoid continually making the same mistakes.

On the other hand, the interpretation of history based on the "democratic conquests" of workers have led the defenders of this vision to parliament and its ministries. This is not surprising. One must not forget that the capitalist class is the first dominant class in history for which blood privileges are not determinant. Any citizen, even a "worker", can reach the bourgeoisie if he has good capacities to defend the bourgeois point of view: this is called social climbing. In this way, democracy can choose the best elements of a worker's origin to control more efficiently the workers' movement. Let us remember the example of the "worker" Noske, who became the leader of the Berlin insurrection of 1919, and who killed R.Luxembourg and K.Liebknecht, Leo Jogiches and thousands of revolutionary workers.

This system not only allows some "workers" to reach a position of oppressors of their ex-class brothers, but also entire "workers' parties" to be chosen by Capital to reinforce its domination (for example: the parties of the 2nd International). So it is not surprising that these parties interpret history as a succession of steps leading to democracy.

As a conclusion, we should say that the two ways of interpreting history correspond to the interests of the two antagonistic classes of our society: either the struggle of the proletariat for the communist revolution, or the bourgeois defence of the democratic dictatorship of Capital.

What do the pseudo-marxists want ?

Let us now leave the questions of parliaments, ministries, governments, unions, directors, and let us examine the following question: what "working-class" does the left wing of Capital wish to see, what would be the result of its politics, what social situation is it aiming at?

To accept their orders means striking for the defence of rights, associating in the name of liberty of unions (with them and under their direction), talking in the name of the right of expression, electing "workers" deputies in the name of democracy; and why wouldn't we also go to jail in the name of the right of amnesty and of the right of the prisoners, why wouldn't we risk our lives in the sacred name of citizenship?

We are not exaggerating: how many workers, who believed them, have ended up being prisoners or being

killed for having written on a wall the order of their own submission: "Long live democracy, death to dictatorship!"?

If the bourgeoisie reaches this aim, it can control in all respects its system of domination, and that is what has happened historically. When a faction of the bourgeoisie is "worn out" by the use of power, it wishes to take a rest and leaves the "opposite" faction to continue its work. The right wing would take care of the killing and imprisonment of the proletarians while the left wing would direct all the workers' claims towards human rights and democratic liberties. We could even imagine that a time would come when the workers would not even think of striking for their "shabby interests", when no "mad" group would have the evil thought of fighting against democracy or of making a revolution.

Let's not leave the choice of arms to the bourgeoisie ...

DIRECT ACTION AND INTERNATIONALISM !

Concerning an international poster.

On the 7th of March 1993, it will be two years since a proletarian insurrection took place in Iraq.

It was on the 7th of March 1991 when, largely in Iraqi Kurdistan, the long insurrectionary process that had shaken the whole of Iraq reached one of its highest points. During this process, the proletariat had expressed itself against the war and against all bourgeois forces in the region: the Ba'ath secret police, Republican Guards, nationalists, local and religious authorities,... This struggle showed proletarians all over the world the only path to follow if wars are to be eliminated forever.

Since then, the international bourgeoisie has done all it can to repress the movement. The nationalists, democrats from all tendencies, humanitarian organisations, the UN and ba'athists, pacifists, all different kinds of religious followers, ... shared the job of crushing us. By concentrating on disarming and recruiting proletarians into nationalist militias, they also sabotaged our internationalism and contributed to the local reorganisation of the State by arranging elections. Without doubt, another aspect of the action aiming to crush us was the complete black-out by the worldwide media as regards the social situation in Iraq.

This insurrectionary process has been recounted at length in various issues

of our central review. A detailed analysis can be found in our French-language review "Communisme" (formerly "Le Communiste"), issues n°33 ("War or Revolution"), 34 ("Revolutionary defeatism in Iraq") and n°36 ("Proletariat against nationalism") and in our English central review "Communism", issue n°7 ("War or Revolution" and "a comrades' testimony: a journey to Iraq"). There is also other information on this question in the framed texts below.

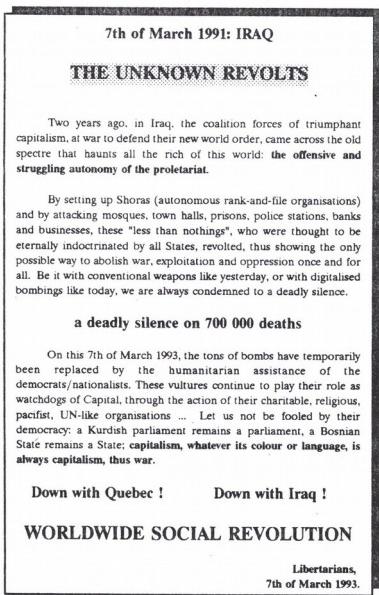
In full community with the struggle that our class is waging in this part of the world, within the framework of an internationalist communist desire to break with the isolation hindering our struggle in Iraq, we've participated in the publication and circulation of an **international poster**, on the occasion of the second anniversary of the insurrection.

This poster, signed "**Internationalist proletarians**", (reproduced at the end of this text), recalls that nationalism, patriotism, pacifism, parliamentarism and, even more specifically today, international "humanitarianism", directed by the UN amongst others, are nothing else but **universal weapons for repression of the proletariat**.

This poster was published in several languages (English, Spanish, French, Kurdish, Arabic, German, ...) by comrades of the ICG, other close contacts and groups from different countries. It was fly-posted,

The insurrectionary process in Iraq started to materialize between the 26th and the 28th of February 1991, first due to the existence of thousands of armed deserters wandering around the city of Basra and a number of neighbouring villages and second, as the central State apparatus started to lose control of the situation. On the 4th of March, in Basra, this process reached another qualitative step as columns of tanks, retreating from Kuwait, shot at symbols of the regime. Clashes took place in different working areas of Baghdad. It was precisely these areas that were bombed by allied forces at that time. On the 4th, 5th and 6th of March, the insurrection spread to the following cities: Nasiriyah, Amara, Najaf, Karbala, Hila, Kut, ... The insurrection in Raniyah, on the 5th of March, marked a generalisation of the insurrection to other regions of Iraq. On the 7th of March, the armed proletariat destroyed one of the most important strongholds of the regime in Sulaimania. On the 8th of March it was Kalar's turn, on the 9th the insurrection spread to Koya, on the 10th to Shatiana. On the 11th of March the proletariat rose up in Arbil and the next day the whole area was in the hands of proletarians. On the 13th of March the last of the Ba'athist resistance was defeated in Aqra, on the 14th in Duhok and on the 15th in Zakho. On the 16th and 17th of March, whole columns of insurgents, setting off from all the cities where they had triumphed, planned to liberate the city of Kirkuk; but the Ba'athist airforce made this task very difficult and the insurrectionary movement paid a toll of thousands of deaths. In spite of these massacres, important battles were still fought and entire barracks were commandeered by the insurrection, e.g. the command of the military region for the whole of Kurdistan, near Sulaimania. Finally, between the 19th and the 21st of March, the insurrection triumphed in Kirkuk, but this city fell back into Ba'athist hands a few days later.

with the help of different contacts and groups of proletarians, on the walls of cities in England, France, Germany, Spain, Iraq, ... "On the fringe of this initiative", to use the same terminology as the poster reproduced below (*"This poster has been produced on the fringe of an international initiative by several groups gathered under one specific signature: INTERNATIONALIST PROLETARIANS."*), a similar action took place in Quebec. However, comrades over there chose to put their own signature to the poster and to develop their own slogans, thus unfortunately expressing their own particularism, rather than affirming the common contents of internationalist communist action stemming from our homogeneous class interests. We explain below how vital it is today to counteract all the particularisms that Capital constantly imposes on us in order to divide the proletariat, by asserting ourselves as a community of struggle with identical interests and objectives, rather than as a mere collection of different groups.



We would like to take this opportunity to stress the profound significance of the presence and activities of the international bourgeois coalition today in Iraq: despite differing interests, they are capable of exemplary unity of action when it comes to defending the heavily shaken bourgeois order. We also want to stress that in the face of this, in the face of Capital, **the assertion of our own terrain of struggle, ie internationalism**, is neither a matter of choice for us, nor merely an adjective that we add to certain local activities, but is a **matter of life or death for the proletariat**.

The capitalist world, its profound social contradiction and the inescapable character of its destruction can only be understood through the assertion of proletarian struggle and **internationalist action**. Outside this struggle, outside direct international action, **talking** about internationalism can only be an illusion; verbal assertion of the international character of the proletariat is devoid of meaning if it does not consequently materialize as common internationalist action, aiming to organize ourselves as a single worldwide force: **the worldwide Communist Party**.

It is in this framework that we often stress the **universal being** that is the proletariat: we are a single international class and the same enemy faces us everywhere. The whole strength of the bourgeoisie consists precisely of **denying** (through the combined action of the world media) the **universal character of the conditions of struggle of the proletariat**, so as to confine each revolt within its specific characteristics.

Denial of the worldwide character of the proletariat is not just "theoretical", but materialises and is structured forcefully by permitting the bourgeoisie to **impose the terrain which suits it best in order to defeat the proletariat**. In other words, by making the proletariat "forget" that it constitutes a single universal class and imposing the terrain of confrontation that suits it best, the bourgeoisie manages to dictate the framework of war it sends us to : **the international unified force of the bourgeoisie against the isolated activity of our class**, confined to such or such an area.

The bourgeoisie uses different methods in order to impose this terrain, **its own terrain**, and to succeed in isolating proletarians country by country: the repression of all direct links between proletarians of different countries, campaigns to falsify, minimise and rubbish the struggles so as to cut them off from their fellow proletarians more easily, blockades, white terror, ... Bourgeois politics for the proletariat, typical social-democratic politics, materialise more particularly by keeping the proletariat of each country within its confines, transforming its "international" activity into activities by proxy, mediation, petitions, of "solidarity" by way of cheques and telegrams. Social-democracy always has its proposals for "internationalism" at the ready, as a means of preventing the struggle of the proletariat in that area against its "own" State.

Let us explain ourselves in the light of history

The wave of struggle between 1917 and 1923 was characterised by an unrivalled generalisation of revolutionary development: from Europe to the Middle East, Latin America to India, the revolutionary movement overrode national borders, allowing the call for international organisation of the proletariat to reverberate throughout the world. The Communist International was, without doubt, an attempt to respond to the

bourgeois desire to isolate the proletariat in Russia. This partial response took the form of, amongst other things, various sorts of sabotage and internationalist action against the armies sent to wage war on insurgent proletarians in Russia. Setting up the Communist International and its Manifesto in 1919 contributed to an intensification of the international insurrectional movement (Germany, Hungary, Bavaria, Austria, Portugal, Brazil) in which the proletariat waged a revolutionary war against its "own State", its "own bourgeoisie". In spite of this, the Communist International (leaving aside the historical responsibility of the Bolsheviks) was not, unfortunately, a true break from the social-democratic conception of a federation of national parties. Each national communist party (with a few exceptions, such as some practical splits made by the K.A.P.D.) continued to be determined by contingencies of opinion based on struggles that were occurring "nationally", a weakness that opened the door for the bourgeoisie to first slow down, then destroy the revolution. Struggle by struggle, nation by nation, international bourgeois forces were able to impose war with their allies. The strength of the bourgeoisie thus resided in its capacity to impose the terrain upon which it is historically strongest: that of struggle launched within the framework of a nation, in which **the balance of forces develops between local proletarians** on one hand, and **international bourgeois forces** on the other. It is precisely when the proletariat showed its internationalism, when our class could structure a common and international response to social war, that the bourgeoisie felt at its weakest. Thus the international proletariat acted to support the insurrection of October 1917 in Russia, breaking the bourgeois information blockade, prolonging revolutionary defeatism in all camps and stopping the war, subsequently taking on different levels of action.

However, in this context one must take into account the immense difficulties that confronted the insurgent proletariat in Mexico or Russia, for example, in trying to communicate news across borders about what was going on. Throughout the rest of the world, the proletarian insurrections in Mexico (1910-1914) and Russia (1917-1919) were portrayed as simple anti-dictatorial popular uprisings. With this aim, Social Democracy had a ready-made theory - that of backward countries, their need for bourgeois revolution and/or "proletarian" revolution to develop bourgeois democratic tasks. This ideology not only led pseudo-anarchists and other social democrats to deny the proletarian character of the Mexican and Russian insurrections, but also led organisations such as the KAI, who had broken away from the 2nd and 3rd Internationals, to sink into the deepest confusion on the issue.

If we apply what we have just described to what is at stake today in Iraq, we can see that it is in the bourgeoisie's interest to confront each one of our class's actions by limiting it to a single region and opposing it with an amalgamation of international

forces (Kurdish nationalists, allied forces, UN, humanitarian and religious organisations...) This is rudimentary for the politico-military force reproducing Capital, which aims to destructure every assertion of our class homogeneity, by attacking all forms of our expression. On our side, we find it very difficult to act as a single unified force, but our enemies are capable of uniting all their forces, in an instant, to crush us whenever it proves necessary.

All our activity **-asserting ourselves as the worldwide proletariat-** must aim to break with the isolation with which the bourgeoisie tries to confine our struggle in Iraq. All of our energy must be directed at extending the direct action we are carrying out in this region by direct action in the rest of the world. We must shatter the isolation, smash the bourgeois ability to isolate some of us and repress us, whilst our class brothers remain indifferent elsewhere.

To this end we must, more than ever, **assert our struggle in Iraq as a moment of the worldwide proletariat's struggle**. We must declare ourselves to be a **single body**, a single class, **united** in the living conditions imposed on us internationally and, moreover, in the worldwide struggle we are waging to abolish our condition as wage-labourers.

Unfortunately, we have come across huge misunderstandings on this issue, even with comrades who are close to us and who claim to agree with our positions.

We have been confronted with a lot of difficulties around the issue of producing a common poster. There was organisational resistance, in keeping with the present sectarian period, which manifested itself in a reluctance to take part in the production and flyposting of the poster or in considering us to be wrong in taking on our own responsibility as a group in signing the poster.

There was also some doubt concerning the information given by our comrades. Some contacts demanded proof (!?) of our assertions, others purely and simply denied the insurrectional character of the proletarian explosions which took place in Iraq and only accepted it in part. Over and above great declarations of principle, we see an expression of submission to the State in all of this: information broadcast by the bourgeois media are more readily accepted than those transmitted, with all the imaginable attendant difficulties, via our militant network.

There were also misunderstandings about the task itself which was considered to be an isolated activity. However, it is impossible to grasp the significance of this international initiative without placing it in the context of its being a further action in our assertion of internationalist activity, community of struggle and **organisation of international communist action**.

There were other misunderstandings about the task itself, too often brought down to the level of "solidarity from us here to them over there" (according to the point of view of those in regions other than the Middle East); conversely, it was seen as a call from "here- Iraq- for those elsewhere to have solidarity with us". In reality it was an activity by the international proletariat "here" and "there" against our enemies "here" and "there".

Finally, stemming from the previous misunderstandings, this activity was considered to be a mediation, a simple advertising campaign for such and such a group of proletarians, rather than a counter-attack on the concerted activity of the worldwide bourgeoisie to isolate a regional faction of our class in order to be better able to crush it.

In general, we are faced with a parliamentary and federalist conception of proletarian unity, in which contacts, instead of pushing for united international action, keep stressing their own particular characteristics, stating that each individual group should be consulted on each of the various slogans or signatures..., without realising that this is a congressional and confederal conception belonging to Social Democracy, practically opposed to the community of struggle and that to accept such criteria by way of thousands of paralysing communications, would transform our community of struggle into a parliament(1).

As the Internationalist Communist Group we have been (and still are) faced with the following situation:

On the one hand, our comrades in Iraq claim that their strength is our strength and that it is precisely our international force that is preventing the allied counter-revolutionary forces from transforming the local reorganisation of the State into an open offensive. They have told us that the action taken by ICG and other internationalist groups in Europe and elsewhere is preventing our direct enemies (nationalists of all tendencies in Kurdistan) from carrying out systematic

attacks on our comrades, because it makes the nationalists more vulnerable.

On the other hand and simultaneously, we try to lead this type of direct action in Europe and in America, yet some close comrades tell us that they don't see the point in such activities; they distrust the information we give them; they say that they would agree if they could add a different signature; they agree with one slogan but not with the other; they state that this kind of activity is pure propaganda, useless in the present situation because nowadays the proletariat "here" is not interested in what's going on "over there", etc...

In short, just at the time when our comrades insist that we maintain the pressure against nationalists, we are faced with thousands of sectarian, anti-organisational and individualistic pretenses that, in spite of their intentions, contribute to the isolation of vanguard sectors of the worldwide proletariat and to the repression of our comrades.

In line with the different calls we have made to proletarian internationalist groups, the Internationalist Communist Group has made a lot of effort to structure and centralise our activity in the region of Iraq in connection with activities we are developing elsewhere.

With our very meagre resources we have struggled to ensure an improved centralisation of various structures in the region. In the face of a total lack of means of communication with Iraq (no international post or telephone) we have undertaken serious efforts to find other ways of international internal contact.

Taking the enormous international importance of the events experienced in the region into account, as well as the exceptional interest that the proletariat there brings to our positions, we have decided to publish a new central review in Kurdish, in addition to the development of the Arabic central review and publishing the Theses of our programmatical direction

(1) Here we must respond to the old accusation made against communists taking initiatives. We are not denying the need for discussion within the proletarian community of struggle, by the comments we have made above. Of course we have to develop and centralise thousands of international discussions. But paralysing internationalist action, under the pretext that each participant must agree with each expression or be consulted about every step of the movement, actually renders any sort of action impossible, particularly in a period when there is no permanent centralising structure for action and discussion. As a very old comrade once said, a step forward in our movement is more important than a dozen programmes. Marx and Engels did not wait to consult all their contacts and comrades before taking direct action, before motivating the international movement by writing and publishing the "Communist Party Manifesto" in 1847.

in Arabic. If possible, we intend to publish, along with other groups of proletarians, a local review with the title "The Internationalist Proletarian", with the aim of providing a wider framework for direct action and propaganda in the region of Iraq.

The flyposting and production of the poster undertaken by militants in various countries should be understood along the same lines. It was not a question of having "**solidarity with**" proletarians in Iraq, but rather one of **acting together** to assert the same struggle, interests, community, force, in a way that the bourgeoisie would find it impossible to wipe us out "bit by bit".

It is important to us that the distinction is made between **false solidarity**, which is seen to be a spectacular communication fictitiously linking workers of different countries and **effective solidarity**, resulting from common struggle.

Posters or leaflets calling for solidarity "here" with those "over there", appealing for compassion, for petitions, fundraising, for letter-writing to our torturers or asking for the help of parliamentarians...are not only harmless for the bourgeoisie, but also constitute Social Democratic politics par excellence, aiming to compartmentalise proletarian needs, such as the liberation of imprisoned comrades, the denunciation of repression in one area and the need to spread information about our comrades' struggles. They constitute bourgeois politique for the proletariat par excellence, because they transform the need for direct action against Capital into collaboration with the bourgeoisie. The extreme opposite of this is proletarian direct action, communism against Capital. Distributing leaflets or posters, depending on their form and content, is part of this activity if it takes place in a worldwide perspective, in line with the fact that the proletariat has only one kind of solidarity with its class brothers: direct action against its own bourgeoisie. Instead of calling for compassion or admiration for activity elsewhere, communist propaganda and agitation aims to facilitate generalisation of the struggle, aims to show that, here and now, the contradictions are fundamentally the same. If proletarians are active elsewhere, it is not a result of specific local characteristics, but is because of general reasons which concern "us" directly... which imply that "we" can and must act as well. Our poster is evidence that the activities of the Iraqi proletariat has illustrated the only possible way to eliminate wars for ever.

The flyposting that was carried out is much more than just flyposting to us, communists in Iraq, Iran, England, Spain, Germany, France, North and South America and elsewhere. It was a specific and modest manifestation of the worldwide force that the proletariat aims to structure. In its attempt- albeit very weak- to put the poster up at the same time in different parts of the globe, the proletariat forced its social enemy to

fight on less secure grounds than it is used to. There is nothing better for nationalist, humanitarian and religious organisations than to concern themselves with "each proletariat" according to "its" national flag (this is how the bourgeoisie sees it!).

By forcing the bourgeoisie to fight on its sinking sand of directly international proletarian activity, we will prevent the crushing of our struggle in Iraq and can prepare tomorrow's struggles.

It is not a question of making platonic appeals for international support, but, with the help of all sections of the proletarian vanguard and militants from the world over, of **counter-attacking politically** the international bourgeoisie and its attempts to liquidate, by way of humanism and nationalism, some of our best comrades.

Let us repeat once again, today dominant defeatism combines with Social-Democracy's historical programme to deny the importance of such an initiative. The key to social-democratic policy on this precise issue is the reality of a weak level of consciousness regarding the existence of our class as a worldwide class, which it uses to wipe out any possibilities of direct action and to divide the proletariat by arguing that there are "objectively different situations in each country" as a way of justifying the impossibility of carrying out action "here and now". The bourgeoisie intervenes to impose silence on the proletariat, forcing it to resort to bourgeois intermediaries (inactivity, in reality), explaining that what goes on "here" has nothing in common with what happens "there" and that the only thing to do is to go via the common channels offered by society to show "solidarity": "make a poster here about the situation over-there", "make a poster here for the people here", send a protest letter, a delegation, or some money...

The historical opposition between parliamentarism and direct action is at play at this level.

Parliamentarism and democracy aim to broadcast their activity to the hilt, to separate decisions from action and theory from practice, advising proletarians of all countries to organise activities of "solidarity" by proxy...

The direct action and communist camp aims to carry out violent direct action against its enemy, not in this sense of immediate violence (as far as the international poster we are discussing is concerned), but in the sense of asserting our struggle on our own terrain: that of **directly international confrontation**, that of the **assertion-** unbearable for the bourgeoisie- of our community of struggle, **of our common being**.

When proletarians from a dozen countries act together (despite all the present constraints) and plan an activity to carry out together (if possible, simulta-

neously) against the same enemy, in the face of the same indifference, fighting for the same interests and objectives... they are carrying out a violent counter-attack on the bourgeoisie.

We are aware of the tragic discrepancy that exists today between the aggression that our class undergoes more or less throughout the world and the difficulties we have in reacting to these attacks. In this sense, we know that this common activity, like all the other activities that have been taken to centralise our struggle in Iraq, is really only a drop in the ocean compared to the enormity of the tasks we need to accomplish. It is obvious that we will need to undertake, against the tide, far more than these initiatives to undo this system of death that suffocates us.

In spite of this and in the context of a tragic absence of structures for international proletarian

centralisation, it is important to us to stress the fact that several comrades from different backgrounds, living in different parts of the world have taken the initiative to centralise themselves against the tide of anti-organisationalism and dominant sectarianism and have thus been able to experience, by acting as one, a necessary moment of the "Growing Union" of the proletariat with a view to the definitive abolition of this world of death.

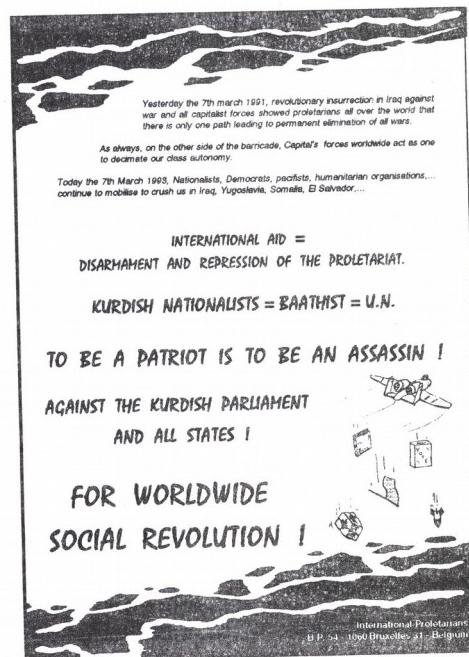
Today, we need this community of practical direct action more than ever. Its links are forged in common activity and it is from these links, against current sectarianism and individualism, that the seeds of an internationalist communist organisation of the proletariat will grow and will destroy the inhuman barbarity to which we are subjected.

Long live worldwide social revolution !

Es lebe die soziale Weltrevolution !

Por la revolución social mundial !

Vive la révolution sociale mondiale !



PUBLICATIONS OF ICG

Communism N° 7

War or revolution.

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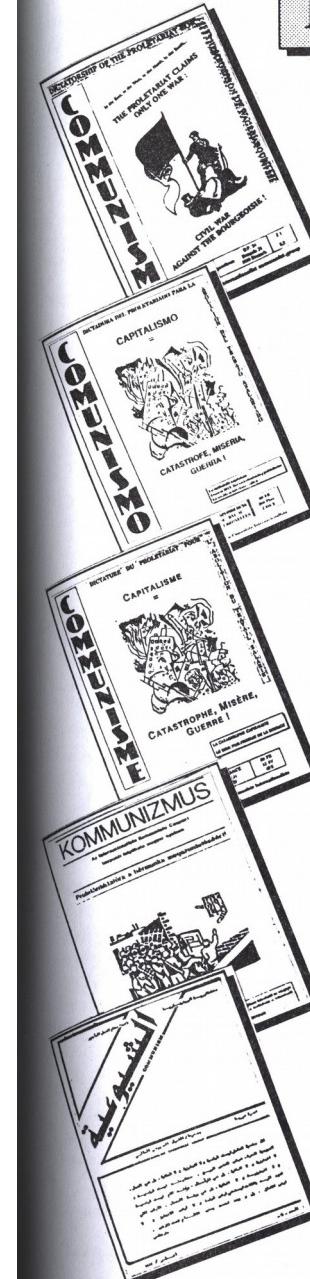
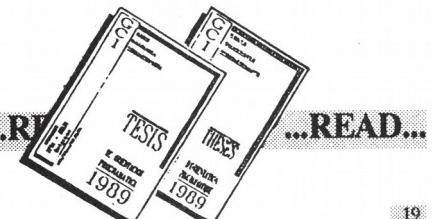
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... READ ALSO...READ ALSO...RE... ...READ...



The following text is not merely the result of a theoretical attempt to place the origin of AIDS back within the mode of production in which it materialised. The text is, above all, the product of a practical struggle led side by side with a militant from our group, who came from North America and who was struck down by AIDS. (Militarists say "hit by", scientists preferring to use the term "struck down by", in order to deny their own responsibility).

Our comrade started to share militant activity with us, on the basis of a radical break from drug addiction. His integration into the group coincided with total abstention from drugs. This is what he said:

"(...) Drug addiction is one of many possible expressions of a social response and position in the face of the frustrations of Capital, along with madness, delinquency and TV addiction. It is an unconscious revolt which stigmatises the refusal of the system in the flesh of its victims. Above all, it is the triumph of Capital's harnessing power: the society of drug addicts is practically the epitome of the capitalist model. Drug addiction is the triumph of individualism and anti-solidarity (each man for himself, dope for himself), the triumph of alienation (the concrete alienation of dependence on a product), the triumph of reification (suicide of a body/object, sold for drugs), the triumph of a palliative (choice between drugs or suffering), the triumph of the commodity (exchange value and use value, having the same denominator: drugs for survival), the triumph of value (a few banknotes for a few milligrams of powder and pleasure), etc... Drug addiction is a system of immediate institutionalised survival, otherwise known as the capitalist system..."

Shortly before writing this, he had learnt that he had AIDS.

It is impossible to describe the struggles of everyday life that this news gave rise to: permanent confrontation with the doctors, violent take over of the medical file compiled on him, radical critique of food (our comrade defined capitalist food as an attempt at generalised poisoning), vicious attempts, in vain, to obtain information on the possibilities publicised by the "alternative" medical vultures, as corrupted by financial interests as their "official" colleagues, struggle against the ideology of anti-pleasure, refusal to die in hospital, permanent battle not to accept -despite every conceivable pressure to do so (1) - the poison AZT, conceived by medical commerce, refusal to take part in experiments aiming to turn him into a guinea-pig...

We lived every one of these moments together, like brothers in arms, with all the determination and passion for this one "true life" that the militant critique of the State constitutes for us. We discussed and chose, fully aware, the orientation and direction to give each of these moments of permanent struggle, with the result that our comrade did not die ill. He died fighting. He died living, as opposed to the majority of half dead-half living "beings" who populate the realm of capitalist social peace today and whose only reality is dictated by the monster Money, which dominates them.

The text we are publishing here follows the rhythm of all these moments. Most of the thoughts within it, as well as the communist point of view which animates it, are inextricably linked with the innumerable activities and discussions that we had together.

This is why this text is not dedicated to our comrade. This text IS our comrade. Our common break from the present world of death makes perfect sense. Here is how he formulated it:

"(...) The context of our struggle is paradox, is contradiction. 'We take up arms to abolish arms. We survive to abolish survival,... and at last to live. We must assume this contradiction, cross it, if we want, one day in the distant future, to live...In order to escape my 'madness' I arrived at an impasse, with two solutions: to chose to fight or to chose not to fight. I chose."

SO AS NOT TO DIE STUPID...

AIDS, PURE PRODUCT OF SCIENCE !

"We continue the struggle for you, comrade, who would have put a recording of the Sex Pistols screaming 'No Future' in your own coffin. For you, comrade, whose veins were infested with a deadly substance created by torturers known as 'doctors'.

For you, who died fighting, slowly assassinated by Progress. With our common hatred of Science and the State we continue to fight with you, comrade!..."



To make it quite clear for those who do not want to be hood-winked, nor to sing along with the State, the lyrics lies spewed out daily by the press, we want to state unequivocally that the AIDS retrovirus is a direct product of the new commercial possibilities opened up by molecular biology! Science, financed and equipped by Research and Progress in the military sector, has produced another 'cock-up' which it is attempting to conceal by reassuring reports fed to public opinion!

AIDS made its brilliant debut amongst the products of Science and the brainchildren of Progress - nuclear and chemical weapons, high security prisons, steroids, adulterated oil, bank safes, bloodletting, antibiotics, the electric chair, plastic surgery, television, parking metres, ECT, A-10 aeroplanes and Apache helicopters...

As materialists, we are going to expose some elements of the social and economic context in which Science and Medicine were struggling, in order to understand that the HIV retrovirus had every "reason" (commercial and/or "accidental") to appear...

at a time when conditions were ripe to create it. This is not a question of sensationalism, but of breaking away from the predominating scientific and democratic folklore.

It is no more possible to envisage the mysterious apparition of AIDS, than it is to appreciate the reasons for the scientists' desperate efforts to obscure its origin, without a grasp of the way in which value intimately determines knowledge, the strict dictatorship of Money over Science, the total collusion between Science and Money (2), the profound unity between pharmaceutical research and commercial need, the inextricable link uniting the military domain, the politicians and the economic world.

We have set out to clarify our fundamental starting points for this text by way of the following comments:

We do not intend to contrast "good" science with "decadent, bad or corrupt" science. Science, as knowledge subsumed by capitalist valorisation, is rotten to the core. Like all of Capital's productive forces, Science is fundamentally inhuman: **not only in its applications, but in its foundations.**

(1) At the time of going to press, the world media announced, on the basis of a 3 year study on 1749 patients: "There is no difference in the rate of progression to a more serious or final stage of the disease between those taking AZT and those not." (Libération, Le Monde.... 24.93)

Since the mid 80's, nearly 10 years now, the same media broadcast reassuring "medical" information that AZT was the only way to combat the fatal progression of AIDS. In retrospect, it may be easier to imagine how the "pressures" we talk about in the introduction materialized. The doctors absolved themselves of responsibility as soon as they heard that our comrade refused, against their advice, to take AZT. Those close to him were practically treated like assassins because of their refusal to support "specialist medical advice", the doctors continuing to terrorize them to the point of specifying the time scale by which his death would be brought forward if their advice was not taken... This constitutes the dictatorship of Value for the imposition of its commodities on human beings.

It is impossible to put Science to good use, just as it is impossible to do so with the Police, for example. We have no more to reproach the Police than we do Science. Our critique is neither a response to "cock-ups" (be they scientific or police) nor a criticism of, for example, the scientific development and police usage of truncheons capable of firing electric shocks. Our practical and theoretical critique relates to the very existence of a force organized and armed in the defence of bourgeois Property. It relates to the essence of a consciousness whose narrow horizons consist of the need to accumulate capital. Science, like the Police, must not be reformed, but destroyed (3).

We apologize for repeating ourselves in this introduction on the subject of how, from a communist point of view, from the point of view of truly human needs, Science is beyond rehabilitation. We reiterate - to ensure that we are really well understood - that in handling this critique of the crap put forward concerning the origin of AIDS, we wish to dissociate ourselves completely from a critique limiting itself to a denunciation of the "excesses" of Science (like the bourgeois left denounce the "excesses" of the Police). The historical dictatorship of Value over Humanity has been enforced on human beings as they strive to develop

knowledge, so that even Science's paradigms are rotten to the core. Such fundamental and sacred (so called neutral) concepts such as "matter", "atom"... are strictly determined by money, the narrow minded horizons of the Scientist, that slave to research (money!) and development (capitalist!), who is himself affected in every way by the dictatorship of the rate of profit.

We are not intending to write a scientific anti-thesis. We have taken up specific scientific arguments from time to time, because from our point of view - intent on the destruction of the science of capitalist death - they can sometimes reveal the reality of the commercial and warmongering iceberg hidden beneath the "tip", made up of tons of papers justifying scientific activity (4). Our analysis is therefore neither "scientific" nor "objective" in the bourgeois sense, stemming rather from the reality of existing social relationships. It is on this basis that we state that AIDS is objectively an **invaluable commodity for Capital**. We want to fight against being used as "medicine fodder", as salaried guinea-pigs.

Let's dive into scientific hell! The old mole is digging underground... let's follow!

Science, Capital's barbarism!

The priests of Science have got several methods of avoiding ridicule and hiding their delirium. One of these is the artificial barrier of abstruse terminology which they call "specialist" and surround themselves with when it comes to their diagnoses, "discoveries", medicines and other witchcraft.

By using another language they are aiming to discourage any attempts to question their power. They wear long white coats (5) for the same reasons. Armed with their jargon and impressive accessories the Scientist is above all a witch, a master!

Medical stupidity is still incapable of pointing out the true **origins** of the illnesses we suffer (for example, the junk food our wages permit us, the torture known as Work!) and these learned assassins continue to surround themselves with prestigious diplomas and other props, to convince the idiot citizens to let themselves be prodded by them.

But along with the "passive" lies of their vocabulary and ceremonies go the active lies - to protect Science you **have to lie, to impose the lie as a truth, dogma and repress those who will not accept it**.

(2) If a further example is needed to illustrate this collusion, it is enough to recall the recent publicity surrounding the contaminated batches of blood which the French Blood Transfusion Centre continued to distribute to haemophiliacs, because it was in their financial interest to do so. But let's not be fooled: the media latches onto a particular story in order to increase the credibility of the whole of Science and the State. When the press reveals cock-ups made by the Police or Scientists, denouncing one or the other as being "irresponsible", it does so with the aim of justifying the very existence of the Police and murderous Medicine.

(3) It is clear that future society, communist society, will require knowledge, as a structured explanation of phenomena and will find it necessary to transmit this knowledge both geographically and down through generations... But we very much doubt that the term "Science" will be retained. It is so loaded with historical bourgeois significance that even if it is brought down to its neutral etymological origin, "exact knowledge of things", it still could not be used, just as the term "Religion" originally refers to the "natural link of human beings with nature and with each other", but which is far too loaded with bourgeois significance to ever be used otherwise.

(4) The same thing goes for Scientific as it does for other information. Generally, when discussing class struggle we only have a few paragraphs at our disposal, robbed of their originality, describing the content of the struggle in terms of numbers of dead. In the same way, to write this text on AIDS we had to read between the lines, absorb opposing points of view in order to destroy them, collect true personal accounts, so much richer than any stories told in the magazines, read pages and pages of disgusting crap, steeped in Knowledge, to reveal contradictions and expose what has been obscured...A task made even more arduous by its being a poorly accessible domain, not only from the point of view of the taboo of scientific Knowledge, but also because of the mindless logic that inevitably clouds the issue around such matters.

(5) This scientific disguise is used today to permit any old clown to make propaganda for whichever suncream or toothpaste. There is no doubt that science sells; above all, there is also no doubt that the common man is convinced by this circus to exchange his life for shiny, coloured mirrors.

Science is a power: that of the State! It is knowledge put to the service of Value. Science is under the orders of the bourgeoisie, serving its Knowledge helping the dominant class in its attempts to impose trade order. The applications of Science are above all commercial and military. Science is a monstrous trade and to impose it, one has to lie!

Galileo was considered to be an heretic by the majority of his colleagues because, by making a mockery of Copernicus's explanation that the earth revolves around the sun, he was exposing, even at that time, the institutionalized ignorance and stupidity that Science represents, thus invalidating years of University and Academic research (6). The lie was imposed on him by making him recant in front of the Inquisition in 1633. But he suffered less than millions of proletarian heretics, who for centuries have tried to flee work, denouncing it as torture but being forced to sing "Work is health", "Hey ho, hey ho! It's off to work we go!" by idiotic popular tradition and Science... or even "Arbeit macht frei".

Nothing has changed since the time when those charlatans imposed their lies. Nothing has changed since official medicine advocated blood letting to cure fevers (7).

Today the picture is no brighter.

We are offered "anti-life" atomic bombs (antibiotics) in order to enable us to return to work quickly.

The author of this article, too naive at the time,

suffered daily injections of the horrendous poison steroid... to treat a minor depression. To "cure" children's coughs they advocate tranquilizers in the form of syrup (good night and have a good day at work tomorrow, parents!)

The contraceptive pill, that booming commercial enterprise, is a real concentration of poisons leading to a risk of not only breast and uterine cancers, but also malformations of the genital tract in their female descendants...etc...etc.

Here we are not talking about medical "mistakes", such as surgical instruments left inside a stomach, confusion over the amputation of a limb or a mix-up of case-notes, but rather the official version of medicine, what every apprentice-torturer receives as orders by his superiors to calm down - sorry, treat- his patients (8) (they hypocritically call their victims "patients").

No, nothing has changed in the world of lies and Science. The most famous doctors who bled their patients to treat them, were protected and paid by the highest State institutions. No one was allowed to question their knowledge and power. Today, the democratic State finances the ideologies and lies of these thousands of scientific assassins in their redeeming white plumage, who bombard us, year after year, with **hypnotics** to numb the time we spend recuperating for work, **stimulants** to keep us awake at work, **hormones** to fatten up the low cost junk which sustains us and **anabolic steroids** to beat our "competitors"... Science is the Barbarism of Capital... in all its splendour!

Did HIV come from monkeys ?

It is hardly surprising that, in common with their ancestors, today's representatives of Science attempt to impose their dogmas and lies upon us. Anything goes when protecting commerce and the State. Hence AIDS! To hide the fact that it is yet another monstrosity directly emanating from their laboratories, the State has not skimped on theories to cloud the issue of the laboratory origin of the virus.

A few examples.

In 1981, when a strange and hitherto unknown epidemic came to light, it was attributed to those who appeared to be particularly vulnerable to it: homosexuals. From this stemmed a surge of delirium masked by new diagnoses, emanating from the same idiots who are "reassuring" us today. One of the hypotheses argued

(6) Copernicus and Galileo went much further than this, without realizing it. In making the Earth turn around the Sun, they theoretically prolonged the influence that the nascent bourgeoisie had upon the lords. The Earth ceased to be the centre of the world and God, the centre of creation. The feudal lords thus lost their divine status. They began to favour the emergence of the new god of the new dominant class: Science.

(7) The very conservative "Ordre des Médecins" in France, well specialised in all sorts of witch-hunts, can no longer conceal that "there is no doubt that the medicine of the 18th century killed more people than it cured". This statement appeared a few years ago in France in the "Quotidien du Médecin", a French medical journal.

(8) As often happens, etymology reveals the deep meaning of a word that modern society has tried to alter. "Patient", from the Latin "patiens", means "he who is made to suffer", a derivation from the Latin "pati" (to suffer). One of the French definitions of "patient" includes the unchanged origin from the Latin: "a person who is subjected to or will be subjected to torture" (Petit Robert 1990).

that "sperm administered rectally had an immunosuppressant effect". More clearly put, these scientists attributed the loss of man's natural defence to the sweet pleasure of bugger! Thanks, Morality!

In 1985, scientops fabricated an impressive web of events, beginning with a virus attributed to the African Green monkey. This was supposed to have mysteriously (?) contaminated West Africans, thus causing a slight mutation of the virus which, after two further steps, brought about the HIV virus, responsible for the epidemic. We are not going to recount the idiotic logic of the laboratory experiments leading them to this conclusion, because in 1988, exposed, they were forced to admit that there had been some contamination in the lab and that the initial virus that they had taken as their starting point... was in fact a product of their own criminal manipulations. Hooray for biology(9)!

Again in 1985, in an attempt to distance the birth date of HIV from the years when material conditions made laboratory fabrication of the virus possible (since 1971!), American scientists "proved" that there were HIV antibodies in more than 50% of blood samples taken and deep frozen in Kenya and Uganda between 1959 and 1970. Loudly proclaimed in all world newspapers, these advances in research were refuted without publicity a few months later: the tests were found to be unreliable and new tests had proved the total absence of HIV antibodies in the same samples! Long live Science!

To distance still further the spectre of the **scientific origin** of AIDS, it was necessary not only to disconnect the dates at which the illness appeared from the time at which it became possible to engineer the virus, but also to conceal its geographical origin (10).

It is reasonable to think that such a scientific monstrosity originated from the historical world centres of accumulation of scientific knowledge (USA, Europe, Latin America..) and that therefore these same centres are attempting (as if by chance!) to distance the origin from themselves : "the sin must have stemmed from Africa or Haiti!"

Thus, in 1982, the Atlanta Centre for Disease control, an organization collecting medical epidemiological information for the US and influencing doctors throughout the world with its reports and

recommendations, defined Haitians as a high risk group. In order to strengthen their case, the CDC argued that Haitians with AIDS do not present any of the "classical" identifying risk factors (IV drug abuse, homosexuality, haemophilia). How did they come to such a conclusion? Simply because the Haitian patients questioned in the US "declared" to the doctors that they were neither homosexuals nor IV drug abusers. One only has to appreciate the taboo of homosexual prostitution in the US as well as in Haiti, the severity of repression by the US Immigration Office, what it is actually like to reply to medical questionnaires (real state interrogation), the widespread condemnation of those admitting to drug addiction... in short, if one can grasp the precariousness of a life clinging to a string pulled by Medicine, Justice and the Immigration Office, one can understand why, out of 34 proletarian immigrants from Haiti who were HIV positive, only 4 would admit the origin of their "crime"!

On this basis, the CDC denounced Haitians and left them to the malice of public opinion. It then took 3 years for the CDC to retract and remove Haitians from the category of a high risk population, although to this day they are banned from giving blood!

This last example is interesting as it illustrates how the cover-ups that the bourgeoisie resort to are never the simple and machiavellian result of a few evil manipulators. All these lies start from a network of half-truths, which meet the needs of the dominant class and obscure the full story (the tree that hides the wood!), distortions of the truth, imposing themselves as ideology.

In defining the Haitians as a high risk group, the scientists started from a material basis (the fear of these immigrant proletarians, a fear consolidated by their refusal to admit to their homosexuality or drug addiction) and conclude statistically ("it's Scientific," they shout as soon as they have collected some numbers) that there are proportionally more Haitians than Americans with HIV!

The condemnation of Haitians has a function - exorcising the fear of millions of Americans - and responds to a need: allowing the continuity of the development of Science (and hence value!) without hindrance. Thus, to protect Medicine and Progress (indispensable to the disorganized movement of Capital), the State has to impose "truths" (ideologies),

(9) Messing about with cells from monkeys is very common in biology. Green monkeys are used for, amongst other things, the production of vaccines, something which points to the fact that if there ever has been a link between HIV and Green monkeys, it would have stemmed directly from the manipulations of the laboratory technocrats' snowy-white and "clean" hands, rather than from the "perverted lust" of Africans, as implied by judeo-christian racist morality.

(10) Some scientists even go so far as claiming that HIV originated in Space! An astrophysicist from the University of Wales, Chandra Wickramasinghe, has been working for years on the cosmic origins of certain illnesses, such as 'flu, and claims that HIV could have come from Space. However spectacular his thesis, it at least shows that he has ruled out the possibility of any other earthly origin apart from laboratory production:

"The AIDS virus either escaped from a laboratory or it comes from Space".
(El País, 24/12/1992)

screening human worries from the horrors of reality.

But these "screens", ideologies, constitute a material force permitting Capital to prolong its inevitable agony: this crap is put forward in scientific terms, littered with absolute declarations, slowly uttered by those responsible for the medical "world", which imposes itself in the face of profanity and makes the idiot people hold Science in awe, in the same way that they kneel in front of the Pope or Yeltsin!

Paradise - be it Christian or "socialist"- uses the Pope's holy water or Castro's cigars as its props and as soon as it is faced with millions of homeless, unemployed, the 40,000 children dying of hunger daily, in short, when its absurd logic is opposed by prosaic reality, there is nothing left!

Nevertheless, it is all these lies that cement public opinion and turns every human being into a schizophrenic, someone separate from himself, sublimating his suffering to the point of defending it as his own happiness (11).

To return to the subject, when one sees the weakness of arguments concerning the origin of AIDS, one would think that this time there is little chance that anyone would fall for them! Wrong! The stupidity of these explanations does not prevent the media from expounding them!

Thus, to distance the date of the appearance of HIV from the period in which material conditions meant that it could be produced in laboratories, the researchers (of lies!) simply "discovered" a few cases of AIDS plump in the middle of the 50's and 60's in Africa. Rapidly it became apparent that tests supposedly demonstrating antibodies to the deadly virus in those old test tubes were invalid (see above). In the end it was decided to diagnose it retrospectively on the basis of vague resemblance to symptoms described in the files of the patients whose blood had been taken!!! To prove the truth of a premise, what better way than to invent it ?

In the same way, in the mid 80's, justifications made to lead research of cases of AIDS dating back to the early 70's towards Africa rather than the U.S. (12) were based purely on the fact that it was unthinkable that such a disease could have passed unnoticed in that centre of Progress and Science that is the USA!

Whatever part stupidity, ignorance, lies, machiavellism, defense of interest, competition.... have to play, what drives doctors and other scientists to prolong their monstrous laboratory creation by equally monstrous lies regarding the origin of the virus, what they have in common is the twisted class point of view that makes them submit to the laws of the State, to the dictatorship of commercial expansion and capitalist progress!

The racism underlying ideologies which place the original appearance of AIDS in Africa or Haiti is merely an extension of the dominant power of this giant of Economy (and thus Science and Progress) that is the US.

But racism is not the prerogative of bourgeois Americans: all nations are racist and participate in one way or another in campaigns which denounce a "neighbour" by using AIDS to reinforce National Union. This is not a new concept: throughout history the bourgeoisie has used illness to feed the racist character of the state.

Around 1550, as an epidemic of syphilis spread throughout Europe, every nation tried to pass the buck to "foreigners". The Russians accused the Poles, the English and the Turks called it "the French disease", the French knew it as the Italian illness and the Italians blamed the Spanish....

A mongst the confusion of these demented "truths", counter-truths imposed upon us, a dominant idea aims to place the origin of the HIV virus well away from scientific labs, far away from the most well-known centres. In fact, everything points to the fact that AIDS appeared at a time when it had become technically possible to create such a virus, but public opinion, vessel for dominant ideology, vulgarizes the scientists' stories and turns itself into a shield against dissenters, making them look like paranoid enemies of Science. It all works out well for them! The world keeps on turning and goods keep on circulating! "The origin of AIDS ", the village gossip explains to me, "can be traced to a mysterious virus found in Green monkeys in Africa and which, because a negro doubtless buggered a monkey, has been transformed into a deadly epidemic. Debauchery (prostitution, homosexuality and drug addiction) then completed the work of these savages by spreading the virus throughout the planet"!



(11) Recently, in a Swiss magazine, we saw a brilliant example of this kind of contradiction within the proletariat. Under the threat of the deportation of all her family, an immigrant mother, terrorised by the Immigration Office, stated: "*I know that there is freedom here in Switzerland, but when the doorbell rings, I tremble.*"

(12) Out of 288,377 cases of AIDS recorded by the WHO from the start of the epidemic until the end of 1990, 50% have been in the US and 25% in 45 African countries. Even though statistics often conceal the essential from us, these ones nevertheless go some way to correct the currently accepted viewpoint that Africa is the most infected continent, an opinion which corroborates western racist theories.

Science's horrific stroll in the garden of retroviruses

We are not going to take our turn at throwing our own pebble in the garden of scientific, journalistic or political hypotheses regarding the precise origin of the AIDS virus. As materialists, we have started by explaining the function of the crap spouted on the subject: to protect Science, defend Medicine, justify the astronomical sums spent in laboratories from which this genetic monster doubtless originates. We now want to give certain examples which show that since the early seventies, it has been technically, scientifically, biologically and materially possible to produce laboratory hybrids (13), clones, of which HIV is only a variant. There is no sensationalism in these proposals: it is a recognised fact, practised and commercially developed by an important section of medical research.

★

"The technology required to make new retroviruses capable of infecting man out of those already known to be carcinogenic or liable to cause immunodeficiencies or brain diseases in other mammals was already well developed and widely published by the beginning of the 70's. Many of the scientists now researching into AIDS previously worked in the oncology laboratories where the techniques were first developed : Gallo, Essex, Heseltine (U.S); Weiss, Jarret (U.K); Montagnier (France); Zhdanov, Lapin (USSR); Ddinhardt (Germany); etc."

The point of this quotation is not only to give the names of some of the assassins who doubtless managed to produce the monstrosities that we are talking about here. This statement by John Seale, member of the British Royal College of Physicians, published in the "New Scientist" of January 1987, illustrates, along with thousands of other examples, the fact that by the early 70's molecular biology had the means to invent and produce retroviruses capable of attacking the human immune system.

In 1969, in parallel with the resurgence of research into oncology, American scientists identified "reverse transcriptase". Don't panic! This Latin word is no more than the mysterious name given by modern wizards to describe an enzyme (enzyme = a protein involved in

controlling the initiation, inhibition and rate of many different chemical reactions in the body; it's a biological catalyst) particular to retroviruses, allowing them to translate their RNA into DNA. Up until this time, Science had claimed with rigid conviction that only the converse was possible, ie the translation of DNA into RNA. The identification of reverse transcriptase has permitted the development of techniques for molecular cloning, ie the production of genetic monsters. This is what we are going to try and explain.

The principal dogma of molecular biology up until then was that it was impossible (and thus heresy!) to think of translating RNA genes into DNA (14). With this "discovery" (15) a whole new revolutionary method was opened up for medicine and "humanity" to, for example, adapt retroviruses specific to animal tumours to the human cell.

Retroviruses are RNA viruses whose specificity lies in their capacity to transcribe their RNA into DNA and then to transmit the DNA into a host cell. The identification of the retroviral enzyme, reverse transcriptase, made it technically possible to insert the virus at the heart of the genetic material of the cell (human or animal), permitting incredible new methods for genetic manipulation and cloning in molecular biology, as well as lucrative commercial enterprise.

Making no apology for repeating ourselves, we want to make sure that the full scale and horror of these weapons that have thus been put in the hands of licensed madmen is understood. We must emphasise that research into retroviruses is not the result of a "brainwave" by a particular scientist, but that the widespread fascination with the "reverse transcriptase" technique is directly linked to the fact that it has made it so easy to create all sorts of hybrids, retroviruses among them, something that was impossible a few years earlier. When it was realised that retroviruses could translate their RNA into DNA a whole new world of possibilities for cloning was opened up.

"In 1971, an amazing confirmation of the unique role of reverse transcriptase came with the demonstration of "infective DNA" (ie capable of infecting) within cells

(13) A hybrid is a genetic monster made up of several cell varieties with different genetic origins.

(14) A few months before reverse transcriptase proved its existence in Science's sceptical eyes, Jacques Monod, considered to be one of the great masters of modern science, defended the prevailing dogma of DNA in his book "Coincidence and Necessity", stating that "it has never been observed, nor is it conceivable, that the information could ever be transferred in the opposite direction." The ridicule killed him!

(15) We have put "discovery" in brackets because it is necessary to realise that many researchers had been opposed to this scientific dogma for a long time (for example, Beljanski, in France, was banned from the Pasteur Institute), but they were denied research funding because they refused to submit themselves to the medical and scientific Inquisition's dogma! Today, the same people who previously defended the "holy dogma", describe the "discovery" of enzymes capable of using viral DNA, as a mould for synthesising DNA, as revolutionary.

infected by retroviruses. When inserted into uninfected cells this DNA reproduces the virus, ie it carries the virus's genetic code."

Since then it has been possible, however clumsily, to produce genetic monsters by way of retroviruses. A few years later, between 1979 and 1981 (the incubation period of HIV!), the first cases of a rare type of pneumonia began to appear in California: it didn't take long for the white coated terrorists to announce that it was related to a new and original retrovirus. AIDS had started to grow in the horrendous garden of Science...and its emergence coincided exactly (we can never repeat this enough!) with the discovery of the existence of retroviruses and the possibility of cloning them. In order to clarify things a bit further, to make sure that the full extent of the catastrophe brought about by hideous experiments in molecular biology is understood, we want to try and explain how commercial stakes in laboratory research changed when reverse transcriptase came on the scene. Commercial interests were without doubt the driving force behind research into retroviruses and this provided a favourable climate for the "hatching" of HIV (whether accidental or deliberate is of little interest to us).

The pharmaceutical industry - real dictators, commanders and suppliers of capital for everything related to scientific research - has been actively researching ways to produce low-cost (to the manufacturer, of course!) human and animal substances. Like all capitalists, the management of a pharmaceutical company produces "medicines" (16), not to "treat", but to increase capital.

For a drug to be profitable, as with all commodities, a certain degree of human labour must be inherent in its production: the pharmaceutical industry would hardly be interested in egg white alone, presented as medicine (17)! On the other hand, production costs cannot be allowed to reach a level that would make the drug prohibitively expensive. Capitalists are not interested in products that cannot be commercialised.

Another determining factor in the race for profit between capitalists is the unbridled research into ways of **producing the same commodity at a lower cost**. To this end, industrialists are permanently researching different technology (a new machine, a new technique,...) which will permit them to turn the foundations of productive forces in the production of a particular commodity upside down. In effect, if a capitalist possesses a machine that allows him to produce a given article with a smaller amount of human labour than his competitors, he will not only be able to "corner the market" by selling it at a slightly reduced rate, but he will also - and above all - realise an **extraordinary surplus value**, because the world market will continue to estimate the social labour time required for production of the commodity from a worldwide point of view. This means that his particular laboratory will produce, during each hour of labour, commodities which are equivalent to much more than one hour of labour elsewhere on the world market. In other words, an hour of labour in this laboratory will produce far more value (and thus a far greater appropriation of surplus-value) than other labs...for as long as it takes their competitors to get hold of the same technological advances!

There is a product (sorry, a poison!), interferon, whose present production costs are at least as high as its toxicity, which is marketed as a treatment for cancer. The purchaser pays \$150 per day and only stops the treatment when the side effects become worse than the cancer! The whole business is extremely profitable for the pharmaceutical industry (18).

As long as capitalists producing this commodity have recourse to the same science and are faced with the same production problems, the situation remains static. In certain periods, it is not in their interest for things to develop, because it would be too blatant a contradiction within the global development of whichever branch of the economy (19). However now, doubtless because it is no longer possible to silence the multiple contradictions arising out of the DNA dogma

(16) The use value of pharmaceutical products is subsumed at this point by exchange value, which could more objectively be referred to as "poison" than "medicine".

(17) The example of egg white is not deliberately provocative! There is an antiviral agent (AL 721) which is very accessible and can be isolated in egg white, but which is not profitable enough for the pharmaceutical industry. They would only show interest if the amount of labour force crystallised within the product allowed its commercialisation as a commodity with a significant enough degree of surplus value!

(18) Discovered in 1957 and marketed as an anti-cancer agent, interferon enabled the capitalists who patented it to make intermittent business out of it, each time justified by research. For 15 years, the labs that were experimenting on it received heavy funding. Always tested on cancer sufferers, the economic performance of interferon was inversely proportional to the state of health of the guinea-pigs: in the early 70's it had to be shelved.

But then genetic manipulations came into play and rekindled interest and funding for the product. Speculation began, shares were soaring! A publicity campaign began to establish research into it, but soon interest (financial!) dropped off again because it became public knowledge that when treatment is stopped cancer cells proliferate! Happily for the product's shareholders, HIV came on the scene and gave another justification for bringing the poison out of the cupboard!

(19) This is how a good doctor, full of illusions about the purity of the world he thought he was entering into, has ended up living under-cover somewhere in Columbia, with killers hired by pharmaceutical trusts hot on his heels. This doctor developed an effective vaccine against hepatitis B, but refused to give his patent up to one of the powerful multinationals. Naive, he intended to give his vaccine to a non-governmental and third-worldist organisation so that, as he believed, the vaccine could be produced at low cost and therefore be available to the poorest populations of Asia and Africa.

and also because competition demands it, capitalists producing interferon are seeing their productive forces turned completely upside down by the discovery of reverse transcriptase and its ability to translate RNA into DNA. It is now possible to produce interferon in large quantities and the pharmaceutical capitalists are jostling one another to put the multiple applications of this "discovery" into practice (interferon is not the only one, of course!) and to put themselves in a position to benefit from this extraordinary, though short-lived surplus value!

We are briefly and as simply as possible, going to describe the difficulties that the pharmaceutical capitalists previously came up against in synthesising biological molecules.

In order to make bacteria (unicellular organisms) produce substances (proteins, that will become the active substance in a medicine) it is necessary to graft onto the bacteria a part of the genome (genetic material) of a cell normally producing the protein, although in small quantities.

The researcher is confronted with many sizeable problems, the biggest of which is the **difficulty in isolating the DNA sequence enabling production of the protein**. DNA is translated into messenger RNA and this mRNA is then read to produce the protein. However here, the researcher is faced with an astronomical number of different sequences (each one coding for a specific protein) amongst which ONLY ONE sequence will give the finished product, the desired protein. The mind boggles when contemplating the search for a few dozen sequences amongst millions.

It is in this field that reverse transcriptase brought to the pharmaceutical capitalist what the steam engine brought to the industrialist. In effect, reverse transcriptase is an enzyme of viral origin (coming from a retrovirus) permitting the synthesis of DNA from RNA. mRNA can be isolated much more easily than the DNA sequence in the genome first, because it is produced in far greater quantities than the DNA which only carries the desired sequence once and second, because, in the majority of cases, a single protein corresponds to one mRNA.

Therefore, our pharmaceutical capitalist who had to find the DNA sequence corresponding to the protein, with all the difficulties that that entailed, now only needs to isolate mRNA, let reverse transcriptase act on it to translate it into DNA which can then be used directly to graft onto bacteria.

It can thus be seen that reverse transcriptase, in addition to permitting the manipulations that we have mentioned above, is an enormous financial, commercial and economic (euphemistically known as "scientific" in specialist journals) asset to capitalism, permitting the emergence of innumerable poisons that will soon be sold to us as medicines.

We will now go on to demonstrate the fervour with which scientists worked to master this enzyme, the source of such profit.

From 1971 onwards, when reverse transcriptase's specific activity was identified, American oncologists threw themselves into fevered research and hunted down the famous enzyme in patients that they had under their thumbs. In 1970, Robert Gallo, of the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, USA, identified and isolated reverse transcriptase in the white blood cells of leukaemia sufferers. In 1971, Stuart Aronson modified a specific mouse tumour retrovirus, extended its infective gene sequence and adapted it to human cells.

The same year, scientists managed to cleave a macaque virus, aiming to stick half of it onto a cleaved "bacteria digester" known as Lambda. This molecule was to be inserted into E.Coli, one of the bacteria present in normal human intestines. Imagine the damage if this genetically engineered molecule were, "by accident", to escape from the lab and find its way back to man! The official version of history is that certain scientists, enemies of Progress, prevented the project from reaching completion. In fact, they just wanted to move on! Other projects came to light and, what is certain is that, by 1971 it was possible to produce genetic jigsaws. A new kind of craftsman, armed with his scalpel (restriction enzymes), his transfer enzymes ("transcriptase" to translate DNA into RNA and reverse transcriptase to do the opposite) and his electron microscope, the molecular biologist is able to launch his attack on viruses, retroviruses and bacteria, cleaving them, assembling and reassembling them and testing them on human embryos (the most expensive) or on monkeys.

In 1972, the World Health Organisation (an agency directly dependent on the UN, and hence mainly on the USA) published an issue of their journal demanding that work be started to study the effects of certain viruses on the immune system, in particular the effects of infection on T lymphocytes (20). This is a further example to illustrate that the manipulations of viruses and retroviruses, whether hybrid or not, have not been carried out by alchemists who have strayed from the common path, but are the direct result of work by the

(20) T lymphocytes are one of the main types of lymphocytes; these are a category of white cells with a so-called "specific" immune function, because they selectively recognise the substance threatening the organism. They print antigens into their memory and can therefore respond immediately the next time they are exposed to a given antigen. Amongst these T lymphocytes ("T" because they are produced via the thymus gland), "T⁴" lymphocytes coordinate and direct the overall defence. Their outer membrane carries the OKT4 molecule, upon which the AIDS retrovirus attaches a corresponding part of its envelope, thus entering, as if sucked in from the inside.

most highly trained (to poison us better!) scientists under the leadership of the world's most prestigious medical men and women.

Does this give us a good enough idea as to the origins of this biological Chernobyl that scientists have subjected us to? No!

In the same year, experimentation upon human beings was announced at the 7th conference of the National Cancer Institute:

"The biology of cancer makes it necessary to study human beings using observational methods of the same degree of sophistication characterising animal experiments", explained Dr John Higginson, director of the National Agency for Cancer Research in Lyon. *"Let it be clear that these techniques 'characterising animal experiments' included the inoculation of the disease!"*(21)

That year, 1972, in the "Jewish Chronic Disease Hospital" in Brooklyn, cancerous tissues were transplanted into men without their knowledge (22).

In 1974, they "successfully" grafted a gene onto a recently fertilized mouse egg: the foreign gene was transmitted hereditarily. They also managed to "successfully" grow sheep visna virus and bovine leukaemia virus in a human cell.

Our description of the infinite horrors of recombinant genetics, gene grafting, monstrous couplings of animal viruses with human cells and criminal and hazardous tests ...stops here. To avoid getting indigestion we are now going to consider how ethical problems, moral anxieties and debates between the 'hawks' and 'doves' of Science and Progress raised by these experiments only represent a further step towards unrestrained experimentation. In the same way that the establishment of peace is necessary for the outbreak of war, conferences organised by scientists to decide whether all of this carries a danger of introducing genetic crap into the human system of heredity actually

constitute the most efficient trampoline from which to launch research, unleashed!

It was along these lines that a conference was held in Asilomar and these hypocrites questioned the risks posed by genetic recombinations. A year long moratorium was imposed, but during a second Asilomar conference they made a ruling: it was necessary to protect the learned, the technicians as well as the human race! What a joke! Boots, gloves and helmets became regulation and varying levels of security were defined according to the degree of danger of the experiments...and everybody threw themselves back into fevered molecular biology research. Morality and ethics were redefined to serve better serve commercial and military. The learned fools of the human race, are financially dependent upon laboratories and the main laboratories are all placing their bets upon molecular biology. So, here we go!

The demand for human cells has become enormous. "Flow", "Microbiological of Walkerville" and "C° of Maryland" are the three giant companies supplying labs, fighting tooth and nail to corner the market. In 7 years, "Flow" alone imported 12,000 pairs of kidneys from South Korea, vivisected from children removed prematurely by caesarian section in the third trimester of pregnancy. "Flow" is a subsidiary of the "General Research Corp.", which is involved in strategic research for the Pentagon and whose president admits that "organs have been bought to carry out organic cultures for medical research". *"In Singapore and Switzerland"*, explains George Wald, Nobel prize winner in Medicine, hardly likely to be suspected of sympathizing with us anti-progressivists, *"we have estimated the number of products of abortion imported by the US between 1969 and 1978 at around 80,000 (23)".*

Commercially, with this 'boom' in molecular biology, the human cell has become an excellent commodity. Companies are being set up, competition is going all out, stimulating Science. Firms are springing up (Cetus, Genentech, Biogene...) and are centring their activities around products of recombinant genetics.

(21) "Tristes chimères", Rolande Girard (1987).

(22) Today this practice of ruthless experimentation is under control, subjected to international legislation... and is thus generalised! In order to put someone who is terminally ill into a trial, the laboratory has to obtain permission from an "Ethics Committee" (yes, yes, "ethics!"), which is in fact a committee of the hospital establishment in which the trial will take place. In order to reassure their relatives, the labs extort "consent" in the form of a signature from the patient...unless this unofficial trial is already part of a "protocol" accepted by international legislation.

"In this way all trials will either be massive yet controlled; or ruthless yet legal. The State legislates the tautology between a citizen made ill by one world and a world which sees the illness it produces as a guaranteed endless industrial challenge. The methods used by those who are given the right to carry out research can be seen, in the long term, to be as damaging as the illness itself. Thus, radiation produces tumours, which are destroyed by radiation, which will give rise to other tumours, etc..."

Extract from "N'Dréa", published by "Os Cangaceiros", February '92.

(23) A vile trade in human organs is developing throughout the world, kidneys being most in demand: nearly 10,000 people are awaiting kidney transplants. Tradesmen are therefore hunting for kidneys. An Anatolian peasant, living in Istanbul, recently had his kidney removed, having thought he had just signed a contract for a job in London. He received \$4000 damages, although the cost of the operation for the recipient came to \$100,000, the difference ending up in the pockets of the surgeons and middle-men. The scandal was such that the white butchers were "sentenced" ... to working in the National Health Service alone, with a temporary ban on working in the private sector!

The kidney is not the only possible source of profit. In Bogota, Colombia, children have their eyes enucleated in the slums and the hospitals: Porto Rico, Guadeloupe and Miami are subsidiaries in the commercialisation of organs -the worldwide capitalist market sees gold even in the gaze of children!

They are always lead by those who are known as the brains of the world, the most famous geneticists, the popes of molecular biology, the avant-garde of cancer research.

The market for molecular biology is ripe. Ever since the synthesis of the first gene in 1972, the molecu-

lar electronics sector has attracted computer firms and constitutes a major industrial and strategic stake. To mention only one of these giants, IBM is interested in attempts to replace silicon, an essential substance for information storage, with organic materials such as protein chains or enzymes, manipulated bacteria or viruses, etc,...

War and Commerce, the driving forces of Science !

Without going into all the new commercial demands of molecular biology since the blossoming of the genetic jigsaw, it is necessary to mention the jewel in the crown of research, one of the most important sources of finance for all these experiments, the real and historical motor of science: the Army.

The arms market has been interested in molecular electronics right from the beginning. The research is financed by enormous amounts of capital and projects are approved one after the other. They obviously remain secret, but all sorts of applications are tried and tested. The applications that are most dangerous to us clearly remain the property of the Army and a law was passed in 1969 to ensure that this monopoly is maintained without exception.

As with all laws, amendments are presented as a defence of the common good, although they actually sanction assassins draped in patriotic colours to produce and test the effectiveness of the genetic monsters they have created:

"...none of the funding granted should be used for open air trials of deadly chemical agents, neither of microorganisms causing disease, nor biological toxins (...), unless the Ministry of Defence, authorized by the US President, confirms that the test is necessary for national security."

The retrovirus tops the bill in all this research because, as we have seen earlier, it is - by way of reverse transcriptase - the essential and ideal vector for incorporation into other genomes.

Delegates from the Pentagon were already announcing the future direction of their research into viral "collages" by 1969:

(24) It is wrong to label as "machiavellian" those who are only stating loud and clear what Capital demands of them. Thus, Robert McNamara, president of the World Bank and ex US Secretary of State (he ordered massive bomb attacks on Vietnam) spoke openly about the methods of struggle against what he calls "galloping demography".

"Epidemic illnesses are a natural way of reducing the population (...). We must take draconian measures for demographic reduction against the will of the population. It has proved impossible or insufficient to reduce birth rates. It is therefore necessary to increase death rates. How? By natural methods: Famine and sickness."

"During the coming 5 to 10 years it will probably be possible to produce a new infective organism which may be considerably different from all known pathogenic micro-organisms".

They went on, in front of the Congress's credit commission:

"The importance of these germs is that they may be resistant to the immunological and therapeutic measures upon which we depend to keep ourselves relatively protected from infectious diseases."

Must we look any further to find the origin of the viral bomb-blast of HIV ? And let us make it quite clear that it was not the result of a momentary aberration by a more machiavellian tendency (24) at the heart of the US State. Biological weapons had been envisaged for decades and the recruitment of the retrovirus dates back to 1952, when the techniques for its "rearrangement" and reproduction had not yet been developed. At this time, in Ottawa, it was envisaged as an agent for foot-and-mouth disease to destroy enemy herds.

Between 1976 and 1977, parliamentary enquiries took place in the US and revealed that a biological research programme had started in 1963 in the Fort Detrick military laboratory, using deadly infectious agents and neurotoxins. During this period, one molecular biologist, one electrician and an employee in the monkey section of Fort Detrick mysteriously died.

As we can see, the joyful achievements that we are lead to by medical research are the result of lengthy research, directly financed and directed by the State. The example of the USA is particularly telling, when one understands the avant-garde function of the local organisation of the bourgeois state in this part of the

world. Progress in molecular biology directly and permanently interests American scientists and militarists.

It should be clear, at this stage of the text, that the separation between scientist, industrialist and militarist is an artificial one; research into molecular biology, more specifically centred on military applications, are inextricably linked with medical research. Fort Detrick, the military laboratory of the US army, near Washington in Maryland, is directly attached to and linked to the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, a suburb of the American capital. To strengthen our argument we have put a short extract of a list of high-powered American scientists in this text, supported by the positions they occupy on the Administrative Councils of major pharmaceutical trusts and the links uniting them with the military domain.

As for the security standards decreed during the shameful conferences in Asilomar, these were set up by the National Institute for Health itself, defining four different types of laboratory of which the most highly protected, known as "P4", is also the best equipped...and the most "militarized": the first of these labs opened in 1977, in the same building as Fort Detrick, conceived and built by "Vickers" weapons factory.

In short, it can be seen that Science and War merge into one, the learned and the militarists rowing together on the galley of Progress and Medicine! Cancer research is an essential support for the development of a cover permitting advances in military destructive technology. It is also a source of power, prestige and money for medical careerists (25). In the field of medical research, the scientist is King! War is the historical motor of Science: Progress never advances faster than it does in wartime and in this domain, research has no limits.

Whilst oncologists were

studying the immune system, in particular between 1970 and 1975, research was being lead in parallel towards the discovery of a weapon of mass destruction:

"We know that American researchers concentrated on the question of whether or not it is possible to produce a kind of chemical or biological weapon that could kill people of one race and leave others more or less unscathed. These are what are known as "ethnic weapons". Certainly, techniques in genetics and molecular biology permit the development of these type of weapons."

This statement is no more from 'Paris-Match' than it is from the pages of a leftist rag. It is a statement made in 1983 by a renowned biologist, Seven Rose, of the British Open University's department for research into the brain.

It doubtless doesn't take many "brains" to spend one's life torturing monkeys and sheep to extract molecular hybrids. It requires even less "humanity", when crazed (but commercial) research by the pharmaceutical industry and other state agents leads to "ethnic weapons". Scientific progress can no longer take us by surprise, in the face of the ever deepening chaos of this moribund society, only just able to regenerate itself through war.

Here is a short illustration of the inextricable links between the industrial and military sectors. It is a list of the administrative and academic staff of the M.I.T. (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), a North American scientific College:

Jerry McAfee,
-Chemical Engineering Visiting Committee Chair
-Director, McDonnell Douglas Corp.
-Director, Chevron USA.
-Director, American Petroleum Institute...

Eugene Edzards Covert
-Director, United Technology.
-Consultant to BBN, Israël, Pratt Whitney.
-Member of NATO Aerospace Policy Committee.
-Consultant, US Army Research Office...

John Deutch
-Chairman, Defense Science Board Task Force on Small International Ballistic Missiles.
-Member of Defense Science Board.
-Member of Army Scientific Advisory Panel...

Steven Meyer
-Consultant, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)...

Alexander Rich
-Member of Corp Marine Biology Lab WHOI.
-Member of US-URSS Joint Committee on Science and Technology ('77-'81)...

All of the non-academic staff linked to the Lincoln Laboratory of the M.I.T. come from the military industrial or defence sectors (more often than not, from both at the same time). All the C.V.s look like this one:

Brent Scowcroft, USAF
-Lieutenant General USAF, 1974.
-Military assistant to President (1972-73)
-Director, Atlantic Council US.
-Director, National Bank of Washington.
-Vice-Chairman, Kissinger Associates, Inc...

(25) As the graffiti on the walls of the Villejuif junior doctors' on-call room goes: "more people live off cancer than die from it!"

further in its savage destruction of human minds and bodies, a new development comes and shatters this illusion.

Value devours everything! The State puts proletarians in the position where the sale of their labour alone is not enough to survive and forces them to sell their own organs.

The requirements of Science and Commerce push human limits ever further, profiting from the proletarians' worsening living conditions. Freedom to buy and sell is the basis of democracy: why not then trade in human organs that others freely choose to sell (26)?

Chemical and biological weapons, ethnic weapons, buying (by Science) and selling human organs (to survive)... We could go on and discuss "Zyklon" pesticides, gases which were used as weapons, the scientists, who created them with such care and attention, always able to claim after the massacre that they never intended them to be used like that. We could talk

about all the poisons put in storage for many years, which the laboratories, always on the look-out for new ways of making profit, are bringing back out today, thanks to AIDS (27). We could describe the horror of the scientific executions of those on death row in the USA, etc., but no further lists of the barbarity created by the insatiable appetite for buying and selling could be enough to open anyone's eyes. What's the point of relating additional horrors, when the very existence of worldwide capitalist Democracy produces the monstrous contradiction of starving more than 120 thousand people to death every day, whilst at the same time, the law of Value forces capitalists to destroy tonnes and tonnes of food ?

This fact alone reveals the true horror of the mass grave on which we live and no amount of "consciousness raising" can change the reality: only worldwide organisation and growing links between revolts springing from the permanent degradation of the proletariat's living conditions can put an end to the capitalist apocalypse.

The AIDS virus is not an accident !

In this short description of the context in which Scientific research has orientated itself in recent years, we have emphasized the simultaneous appearance of AIDS and the technological ability to produce it. There are more specific and very coherent articles which give a fuller account of the actual process leading to the production of HIV (28). We cannot delay ourselves further by attempting to prove what the facts prove alone: **it's not a coincidence that such a spectacularly virulent and fatal virus appeared at a time**

when the technology existed to produce it. At least we will not die stupid as long as we denounce the true criminals at the origin of this epidemic: the scientists!

The State covers it up quite badly, and maximum embarrassment is caused by the "taboo" question of whether it's technically possible to produce HIV. In order to deny its scientific origins, Science's disciples only have one answer: "what possible interest could there be in developing a virus against which we cannot

(26) What could be more normal than the American democratic model being, once again, the sword defending private property, right down to its bodily and organic manifestations? A recent judgment by the Californian Supreme Court recognised that everyone has property rights over their body and thus accepts that parts of it can be freely commercialised. The freedom to have one's body at one's disposal can not be denied by the State. Proletarian in hardship, democracy protects you: you have the right to sell your kidney! Who could still claim that the present day salaried slave is superior to the slave of Antiquity?

(27) We want to talk about AZT - zidovudine - which is extremely toxic. Peter Duesberg, a professor of Molecular Biology, not one to criticize science much normally, stated the following:

"I think that AZT is AIDS on prescription. This substance prevents the process of replication of DNA within cells, thus blocking not only the multiplication of the HIV virus, but at the same time destroying all reproducing cells, particularly those of the immune system. AZT is not only useless but fatal."

(28) The AIDS virus, according to one of these theories, is a hybrid resulting from assembling the VISNA virus (a "lentivirus" responsible for a brain disease in sheep, largely in Island, and which, like HIV, is characterised by its extremely long incubation period) with part of HTLV-1 attached to it (HTLV-1 is a widespread virus in Northern Japan and causes lymphoproliferative cancers in humans). In order to defend their theory, the scientists (who are now treated as heretics and have been banned) describe a 23 point assembly that occurs when one "couples" the AIDS virus with VISNA. This would appear to confirm the close genetic origins of these two viruses: they conclude their argument by illustrating that the part of the human virus (HTLV-1) grafted onto VISNA (previously non-virulent for humans), is precisely the part of the genetic code (DNA) which programmes the production of a protein permitting the attachment of HTLV-1 onto human T-4 lymphocytes. According to this theory, as soon as the protein was attached, VISNA became virulent to the cells and thus to humans!

This theory has since been denounced as propaganda orchestrated by counter-espionage from what was the USSR. Gorbachov even made an official apology. Is this a manoeuvre to cloud the issue or are these real capitalist contradictions? Today, Professor Gallo himself, the number 1 of AIDS research, has been denounced by the American police for having concealed details of his discovery of the AIDS virus. Will Clinton also apologize?

protect ourselves?!" For these medical priests, HIV does not meet the criteria for effectiveness with malicious intent,... and could not, therefore, have been produced by society!

Science continually sings the praises of the ideology of "objectivity" and luckily this has had an effect on some of them. When, in 1987, a journalist bluntly asked whether "*if HIV did not exist, would it be possible to create it?*", Dr.Brun-Vezinet replied "*Yes, we can!*". Professor Montagnier answered "*Yes, we could*". Dr.Chermann sat on the fence and Dr.Alizon denied the possibility... although in explaining why not, actually admitted that, if one thought hard about it, "*it would be possible to produce an even more infectious agent, by preserving the viral envelope capable of recognising lymphocytes and using it to produce a much more pathogenic virus such as the 'flu virus; this could cause epidemics spreading like wildfire*" (29).

It is thus impossible to deny that Science is capable of producing similar viruses, but even those who admit this to us put their white coats back on and ask us solemnly to disregard the poisons they create, to forget their commercial and military function, to ignore the innumerable cock-ups made in their labs, to clear our minds of the collusion between Cancer Research and National Defence Institutes, to stop thinking about the microbiological demons they continue to conceive...and to believe in the Holy Crusade of Science!

It's like listening to the worshippers of whichever god explaining that if you don't believe, it's because you have no faith, and if you want the faith...you have to believe. Religion promises us Paradise if we keep our mouths shut on earth; and Science assures us of a cure if we submit ourselves and close our eyes to it! Science and Religion are part of the same family: Value. The State. They have both always played a part in maintaining the status quo, either by way of preservation or adjustment of the worldwide system. One of the ways in which they try to do this is by lying outright, concealing reality because it is too powerful in decredibilising the State.

In February 1991 it was revealed that children between 6 and 15 years old were regularly raped by about 20 priests at a Catholic Convent near Montreal between 1950 and 1970. The police had known about it from the beginning, but the State had denied and covered up the facts in order to impose christian order, necessary for the coherence of the local State at the time. The same thing is happening as regards AIDS today, but the consequences of "confessing" are far heavier as there is much more at stake. Science is

already accused of impotence, faced with the impossibility of curing; where would it be if the connection between society's military projects and the appearance of this worldwide epidemic were made public? The hideous Health representatives prefer to recite their moral litany, encouraging "prevention" as regards sexual excesses "which, for the most part, do not increase satisfaction, but on the contrary, lead to serious risks such as AIDS," as put by Professor Montagnier of the Pasteur Institute in Paris (30).

Today, discussions concerning the origin of AIDS have been more or less stifled by medical ideological enterprise. The most recent argument used to stave off any attempts to revive this issue consists of giving prime importance to finding practical solutions to AIDS: "Discussing the origin of AIDS is philosophizing, what we need are concrete solutions". Thus the race for research and profit is justified. The medical stampede can continue, determined more than ever by commercial competition, exacerbated as the capitalist crisis deepens day by day.

In the face of this, we had to break down the wall of silence built by the scientific State and resile the AIDS epidemic in the real context in which it appeared: the worldwide capitalist race for ever increasingly concentrated accumulation of Value.

The AIDS virus is not an accident !

Whether it is the result of an error during laboratory manipulations, a hybrid produced by a brain driven mad by Science or the direct result of crazed search for yet another weapon to add to the teeming armamentarium of those paranoid in the Defence of the Nation, matters little. Whatever the case, the AIDS retrovirus is the product of a society made ill by money, competition and commerce! AIDS is not a God-sent plague to remind us of morality. AIDS is the result of the infernal logic that human beings have suffered since Value became autonomous by way of a law submitting every human relationship, all new knowledge, all creative activity...to the strict dictatorship of the world market.

The laws of the market impose a permanent war between us all. Capitalists tear each other apart to corner the market and they mercilessly submit the very people they exploit -the proletarians- to the same war: "If you want a wage you must fight your competitors on the Labour Market!" In this war of all against all, Capital's self-limiting mechanism (the production of more surplus value than it is capable of realising) tends to be overruled by the infernal competition between

(29) "Tristes chimères", Rolande Girard (1987).

(30) In this text we have not attempted to comment on the way in which the State has used AIDS to reinforce its anti-pleasure drive. AIDS is presented as a penitence and Morality has never been so powerful in imposing Family, Tradition, Abstinence, Sacrifice, Marriage and Chastity as guardians of Order in this world.

market competitors; this race for profit leads them to conceive and develop "revolutionary" productive forces in all fields, permitting them to dominate one or other sector of the market by selling at lower cost.

Progress and Science thus rub shoulders with Commerce by submitting human consciousness to the same market dictatorship. Science only functions and develops thanks to massive funding of research along the lines intended by capitalists - research into developing the most effective weapon, to satisfy the cravings of whichever capitalist association, baptized "Nation". Research into machines, knowledge or techniques to yield the best production. Research to be the first to launch a drug able to relieve headaches completely or to bring about hair regrowth onto the market!

The AIDS virus is not an accident !

It is the result of unbridled research by Science, under the orders of Commerce, responding to the market needs of the pharmaceutical industry, bionics, molecular electronics, computing, etc,...

Science is not an accident either. Science is the product, and agent, of Capital. Science is the negation of human knowledge, in that its development is based on the need for capitalist development. It exists as the negation of Humankind, seeking to submit every discovery, every experience, all knowledge to the democratic dictatorship of Commodity and the State defending it.

It doesn't matter to them that the medicines they create are tested with fatal consequences on human beings who accept the tests because they have no other means to live or because they no longer have the strength to protest: the aim of Science is Commerce! The function of Science...is Ignorance: by elevating itself to the level of a divine sect next to the State that finances it, Science takes on, maintains and directs the separation between human beings and the knowledge that is vital to them. In this way the proletariat remains ignorant of the enemy, the total antagonism: Capital. It is impossible to describe the inhumanity to which the proletariat is subjected: if we have a headache, it is not because we have worked eight hours a day,... but because we need aspirin!

"...With you, comrade, we will continue to fight! Every moment and everywhere. We saw your burial as a fight, because every moment in this world of silence is a fight. Yes! Even to bury a comrade! Can you believe it? The balance of forces between our class and the hated class is even expressed in a funeral. At a different time, at a time when one of our deaths is paid for by hundreds of theirs, we could have unfurled our flags, black with anger, and celebrated your memory in a life of revolution.

However, this time, we had to fight to prevent one of those dark hyenas known as "priests" from leaning over you; we had to fight to impose your "real family" - those of us who had forged bonds of struggle together - as your funeral procession; we had to fight because, even at the time of the cremation, some 'bigwig' wanted to take up more time and place to send-off his trussed-up dead; we had to struggle against the farce of those poor idiots, dressed in grey and paid to cry, all the while hurrying the ceremonies along; we had to struggle against the ridicule of the morbid spectacle that surrounds such circumstances, where, in this anti-pleasure society, the done thing is to make the widow cry and to screw-up the living! Don't worry, comrade, your death has not frightened us. It has given us a lot more determination in our struggle to get rid of the monstrous inhumanity of Capital once and for all!

Science will not have the last word. Already some of the proletarians affected by the same poison that condemned you, have started to avenge their future deaths - by biting police and other agents of the State who have sought to control them, until they have drawn blood. Proletarian resistance will always find a suitable response to the most twisted forms of capitalist aggression!

"Is there life after death?"

With you, comrade, we answer yes. We continue to maintain that "true life" resides within the continuity of our relentless struggle to organise ourselves as a force, determined to bring down, once and for all, the pathetic leeches who exploit us, to impose a society without classes and without money."



Introduction

We have chosen to present here a text, called "The Beast of Property", written by Johann Most in 1883, for different reasons: first of all, we want to break with a myth: the myth claiming that no revolutionary organization existed outside and against Social Democracy before 1914. Indeed, all those who never accepted that Social Democracy (considered here as the whole of the parties organized in and around the Second International) (1) was counterrevolutionary from its birth, created a myth, a myth claiming that before the fateful date of 1914 Social Democracy was a revolutionary organization defending the interests of the proletariat. This meant that, according to Social Democracy, any attempt to organize outside and against itself, was condemned to political death and/or sectarianism. We completely disagree with this position. Without going into details, it is important to mention that Social Democracy was engendered by the counterrevolution that followed the defeat of the Paris Commune and more generally the defeat of the whole proletarian movement of that period. Ideologizing the revolutionary program elaborated by Marx and Engels, emptying it of its necrological content (2) to keep only its envelop, its form, its words, Social Democracy created "marxism" (i.e. an attempt to give a new look to the same old theories of political economy that Marx criticized) and by that, a fictitious filiation with the First International of which it took the name: Second International; Social Democracy, the party of Capital for the workers,

became a major force of attraction for the proletariat which was then framed and disciplined in order to participate in the good functioning of the system. How did Social Democracy do that? It disintegrated the proletariat into a mere economic category: the workers, reducing the proletariat to "those who work", no matter if they fight against work or not, annihilating any attempt at struggling. On the other hand, Social Democracy aimed to organize the whole life of these workers: it created trade unions, schools, universities, cultural groups, choral groups, etc., so as to control every minute of the workers' life and be able to channel every fit of anger into a claim for "better living conditions", the aim of which was to make exploitation acceptable to the exploited.

In Germany the strength of the Social Democratic Party was immense, but many militants tried to organize against it. "Die Jungen" ('The Young') are one of the most interesting oppositions, because, from 1889 to 1891, the date of their expulsion from the SDP, this group, in its fight against reformism and parliamentarism, claimed Marx's revolutionary program and rejected what Social Democracy had made of it. Other oppositions fought against the counterrevolutionary nature of an organization that spoke out in the name of the revolution but defended reformism, parliamentarism, gradualism and pacifism; but very few of them were able to reappropriate the bases of the revolution

(1) Nevertheless, Social Democracy is not only the formal parties organized in and around the Second International: it has a much larger dimension: the concept of Social Democracy, in its full meaning, refers to the historical party of the counterrevolution, that is to say that it refers to the framework in which Capital enrolls the workers on behalf of "socialism".

(2) Here we talk about the necrological content of the analysis made by revolutionaries. By "necrological content" we mean the intrinsically catastrophic essence of Capitalism. Indeed, Capitalism, as everything else, carries in itself its own contradictions, its own gravediggers, its own death; in this case the proletariat. It is what Marx develops in "Capital", and it is what Social democracy (and more particularly, the "marxist" current, very fond of political economy) tried hard to transform and recuperate. And it is very logical: the aim of Social Democracy being the preservation, the maintenance of this system, it cannot see in "Capital" anything else but a biology of capitalist social relationships, an analysis of their functioning. Of course this is totally coherent, since the Social Democrat point of view is the improvement and the reform of this mode of production. On the contrary, we, revolutionaries, have a totally antagonistic view point and a totally antagonistic aim: we only care and fight for the destruction of this system, and it is also in this sense and from this point of view that Marx wrote "Capital": a necrology of capitalist social relationships.

For more details cf. the article published in French in *Communisme* n°30 "Contributions à la Critique de l'Economie" - chapitre 3 "Délimitation de notre critique de l'Economie: Le marxisme en tant qu'économie politique en opposition avec l'œuvre de Marx".

ary program elaborated by Marx, very few militants recognized the difference between Marx and "marxism" (in the sense of the ideologization of Marx's criticism), and many negated the programmatical importance of the former in their struggle against the latter. This weakness led the militants breaking with the SDP to the anarchist ideology... Indeed, to briefly sum up this quite complex process, let's say that the leadership of the opposition to Social Democracy was, in most cases, confiscated by the anarchist ideology. The story of "Die Jungen" is a good example of this process. After their exclusion from the SDP, "Die Jungen" created the "Gathering of the Independent Socialists" that united two divergent tendencies: the first one opposing the counterrevolutionary and parliamentarist character of the SDP, the second one opposing the exclusions and the dictatorship of the SDP as well as the "compulsory centralisation that comes with it". Up until 1893, "Der Sozialist", the journal of the newborn organization, will be the centre of polemics between the two tendencies. From 1893, and in spite of the so-called Oppositional tendency, Gustav Landauer takes the leadership of the journal. The Oppositional tendency quits. Some of its militants will go back to the SDP, the others will stop all activities. What is left of "Die Jungen" and "Der Sozialist", under Landauer's influence will turn to the social democratic version of anarchism: educationism (to educate each proletarian before taking mass actions), self-management (to form little communities producing in accordance with their needs) and pacifism (against violence and direct action). Landauer stands for "a real democracy" and rejects the dictatorship of the proletariat ("Would it be a threat... I would hate it and fight against it as if it was the plague" he said). In January 1919 (!) Landauer goes back to the parliament (to propagate his ideas and "fight without concession" the parliamentary system). He will be assassinated in May 1919, his work done: the breaking of "Die Jungen" has come back to the bosom of the German Social Democratic Party.

In this short paragraph we wanted to recall the role of Social Democracy and the necessity to break the myth created about it. It is in this sense that we consider "The Beast of Property" as being interesting and important. This text belongs to the whole of the attempts made to break with Social Democracy, that is the first reason why we publish it.

The second reason why we present this text is that it is representative of the period in which it was written. It really is an expression of the struggles of its epoch, as well as the memory of the attempts of revolutionary militants who undertook the direction of the struggles against Social Democracy.

The text we present here was written in the United States in 1883 by an ex-MP of the SDP: Johann Most. The trajectory of this militant is interesting inasmuch as

it is representative of the trajectory of many of his comrades and, in general, of many militants all over the world in their fight against Social Democracy.

Born in 1846 in Germany, Johann Most joined in 1867 the Zurich section of the International Working-Men's Association (First International). From 1869 until 1870, he lived in Austria, in Vienna (where he was three times sent to jail because of his militant activities). In 1871, he was expelled from that country and he went back to Germany where he edited social democratic newspapers. In 1874, he was elected to the Reichstag. This experience led him to break with the SDP. Indeed, instead of finding a place where he could defend Socialism and the interest of the working class, he discovered what he called later "*a theatre of marionettes*", being silenced each time when the defence of the working class was at stake. Most had thought that the parliament could be used as a tribune for the revolution. He quickly experienced that it was only a show. Many other militants underwent the same experience, from Karl Liebknecht to Domela Nieuwenhuis and Otto Rühle, who broke with parliamentarism at different periods but on the same basis. In 1878, Most was re-elected to the Reichstag, but the same year, he broke with the party and, at the same time, with parliamentarism.

1878 is the year when socialist activities were banned by the Bismarck government. In fact, these anti-socialist laws (they were called 'Exceptional Laws') did not prevent the SDP from taking part in the Reichstag, far from it. These were laws against militant activities, that is to say against the militant press, against propaganda, meetings, demonstrations... Therefore all these activities had to be done illegally, and the SDP refused to organize them, arguing that the party was safe and should organize legally. Social Democracy used the anti-socialist laws to clean its own organization, to get rid of the "trouble-makers" and to impose, even more strongly, reformism and pacifism as the program on the workers. These anti-socialist laws were introduced against the last revolutionary militants of the SDP. The party justified its refusal to organize illegally by arguing that it was a necessity to defend the acquisitions of the organization (schools, seats in parliament, trade-unions,...), arguing that it was a necessity to defend the achievements of the workers saying that there was a danger of losing them in confrontations with the State. The same arguments were used by the same party later, to justify the vote for the war credits in 1914.

For a lot of militants this was the last straw. Johann Most is one of them. Expelled from Berlin, he went to London where he published the first issue of "Freiheit" ("Freedom"), a journal he will publish until he dies in 1906. The SDP of Germany officially expelled him in 1880 at the Congress of Wyden, arguing that Most had anti-organisational attitudes and a bad character.

In 1881, the International Social Revolutionary Congress of London took place thanks to Most's and other European militants' initiative. These militants' aim was to re-establish a true revolutionary International. Johann Most could not attend the Congress for he was in jail because of an article applauding the assassination of Alexander II.

The Congress took the name of the "First International" but it refused any central committee or executive bureau, since no central authority was accepted except for a bureau of information. We can see the weakness of this refusal to organize around a direction, around leaders, whatever name they take, central committee, executive organ,... Because, for sure, a direction will exist anyway and if it is not the revolutionary one, it will be the one of the bourgeoisie, of democracy. The militants will learn it through their own experience and will draw the lessons. On the other hand, while this weakness is present in many attempts to gather militant forces, while this refusal of any kind of leadership is clearly written in the programs of these organizations, it is visible that the practice of the same militants is quite different, as we will see later. The threat that this so called Black International posed, in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, never became a reality. In Europe, it died soon, but in the United States it had sequel as we will see later.

As we have said, while staying in London, Most published the first issues of "Freiheit". By 1880, the journal pushed revolutionary conspiracy in the Blanquist sense of the term (that is to say the organization of clandestine structures prepared to attack the State at its strategical points in order to seize power) and propaganda by the deed. If it is clear to us that the need for direct action, for proletarian violent actions against the bourgeoisie and its State, as well as the need to organize illegally are essential features of the revolutionary process; nevertheless, we must make it clear that the proletarian insurrection, the communist revolution is something completely different from an isolated conspiracy. If it is very important for the revolutionary militants to be aware of the necessity of direct action and conspiracy in order to seize power, it is at the same time as important to be able to evaluate the period and the balance of forces between the classes to avoid the trap of the Blanquist ideology (3) claiming that the revolution could be achieved by an isolated coup.

"Freiheit" called for the violent destruction of capitalism, denouncing all partial reforms as mere betrayals; the lesson Johann Most drew of his experience as deputy will lead the struggle of all his life. Most said one day:

"that the end is to be made to the mockery of the ballot, and that the best thing one can do with such fellows as Jay Gould and Vanderbilt [american railway magnates] is to hang them on the nearest lamp-post".

Most urged the working class: if it did not crush their oppressors, the oppressors would crush them, they would

"drown the revolution in the blood of the best and rivet the chains of slavery more firmly than ever. Kill or be killed is the alternative."

And he added,

"We are revolutionists not from the love of gore, but because there is no other way to free and redeem mankind. History has taught that. No use of trying reform. The Gordian knot can be cut only by the sword, and within a few years the masses will write the history of the world".



OUR CIVILISATION :
THE BULLET AND POLICEMAN'S CLUB !

It was indeed very clear to Johann Most that the only alternative to the barbarity of this society was the social revolution and he was convinced of the necessity to organize and arm in order to overthrow and defeat Capital.

In 1882, facing very strong repression in England, Most answers positively to J.H. Schwab's invitation and left London for Chicago.

When he arrives in the USA, it is the time of a deep and hard crisis: unemployment, misery, homelessness and starvation. In Chicago alone almost 34,000 workers were thrown out of work. Unemployment, added to the awful living conditions, housing, ... led to social unrest, spontaneous upsurge, demonstrations, boycotts. Strike after strike, the proletarians had to face the local police and vigilantes, the National Guard units, the state milicias, the Pinkerton agents,... Bosses made blacklists and lockouts whenever they needed them and the federal troops were always there to protect them.

(3) By "Blanquist ideology" we mean the ideology based on the weaknesses of Blanqui's practice.

As to political organizations, Social Democracy represented by the Socialist Labor Party of the USA endured, around the end of the '70s, lots of divisions and disagreements especially concerning two questions: the question of self-defence and the question of political compromise. Some militants of the SLP, as early as 1875, founded the "Lehr-und-Wehr Verein" ('Education and Defense Society') in order to never again be beaten by the police or the militia without fighting back (4). Under various names, these groups of self-defence drilled with rifles and bayonets. Their purpose was to protect mass meetings, demonstrations or any kind of proletarian gathering from the brutality of the State guards. In 1878, the year of the anti-socialist laws in Germany (that is to say the year the SDP purged its ranks), the National Executive Committee of the SLP banned any armed organization and ordered its members to withdraw. One more confirmation of the aim of Social Democracy: to disarm the proletariat and to clean its own ranks from any practice of direct action against the State. The National Executive Committee dissociated itself from any armed organization "*that tries to accomplish by force what could be obtained through ballot*". In 1879, the State of Illinois proclaimed a new law forbidding all "*groups of men wearing weapons without licence*" that "*associate as military company or instruct or file past, wearing arms, in whatever city, without the government's permission*". The "Lehr-und-Wehr Verein" and other similar structures it engendered (such as the "Bohemian Sharpshooters", the "Jaeger Verein", the "Irish Guards",...) went underground. Moreover, the SLP proposed to unify with the Greenback-Labor Party (a liberal party) to be stronger for the presidential elections of 1880. But an "anti-compromise" opposition was born that was very virulent in favouring self-defence organizations and refusing any kind of alliance with what they called a reformist party. A little later, during the elections, electoral officials falsified the election results in Chicago to prevent the victory of a SLP member and even though he eventually got his mandate, it was the last straw convincing many militants to break with the SLP and turn to direct action. Amongst these militants two currents could be seen: one preaching trade union work and fighting for direct economic gains, the other willing to abandon political and economic reforms in favour of revolutionary action. Nevertheless, together they created in November 1880 a new organization in New York: the "Socialist Revolutionary Club", whose most famous members were Parsons, Spies, Schwab, Grottkau and

Neebe (5), led by Wilhelm Hasselmann, an ex-member of the SDP of Germany, which had expelled him together with Johann Most in 1880.

The militants claiming that revolutionary action was urgent and should begin right now no longer believed that ballots could change the system. They urged direct action and armed struggle against the State, the Parliament and reforms. And that's what they called on proletarians to do: the direct and final confrontation with Capital. One of Parsons' phrases expresses at the same time the force and the limit of the militants in that period as far as the necessity to overthrow the State is concerned. Parsons said:

"The State in every form is nothing else than an organized conspiracy of the propertied class to deprive the working-class of their natural rights."

We do agree with this quotation. But we would like to add that by "natural rights" we mean, just like Parsons does, the natural needs that human beings feel as soon as they are born: the need of human community, love, food, shelter and the need of reproduction of his species. These are the "natural rights" of human beings. Of course, there is an easy confusion that can be made, and that is being made and maintained by Democracy. Indeed, Democracy is the reign of the citizen, that is to say, the total negation of the existing classes (and therefore of the antagonism between these two classes). The citizen has many rights as long as he behaves as a good citizen, i.e. as long as he defends Democracy. But those rights we are talking about now (constitutional rights, right of vote, liberty, equality, fraternity,... in short the rights and duties of any good citizen who loves his country and is ready to die for it) are only the recuperation and the deviation of so called "natural rights". Let us mention that as soon as the citizen behaves like a proletarian, as soon as he defends his interest against exploitation, rights cease to exist. No right is granted to the working-class when it acts as a class. Rights are only granted to citizens. Repressive terror for all those who do not behave as good citizens is a logical response to the bourgeois ideal of democratic paradise (6).

As we have said, the International Social Revolutionary Congress of London died very soon after it was founded, but it had consequences in the USA: on 21st, 22nd and 23rd October, 1881, on the initiative of

(4) The german name of this structure reveals the numerical importance, in that period, of the immigration of militants coming from Germany.

(5) Parsons and Spies, are two of the militants that will be accused of murder after the events of May 1886 at Haymarket. They will be hanged on the 11 november 1887 as well as Engel and Fisher; Lingg will commit suicide in jail, and Schwab and Fielden will be condemned to life imprisonment.

"The day will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you are throttling today"

Spies' last words still echoes and it is to prevent them from fading away that we publish this text. The day will come when our comrades' prophecy will quell for ever the terror of the proletarian's torturers... we are working in this perspective.

(6) For more details on this subject, see in this review "Against the Myth of Democratic Rights and Liberties"

the New York Social Revolutionary Club, the first attempt to centralize the revolutionary socialists on a national scale took place. The Congress took the name of "Congress of Socialists of the United States". Schwab, Parsons and Spies played the leading role. The Congress condemned the British government for the repression in Ireland, expressed its support to the "populists" in Russia for their "unrelenting warfare" against the tsar, it denounced private property and "wage slavery", endorsed the decisions of London, and declared it was in favour of "armed organizations of workingmen who stand still to resist, gun in hand". Nevertheless, a compromise had to be made between those saying that parliament could be a useful means of agitation and those claiming that nothing could ever be obtained through the ballot. The compromise which was adopted let each group decide for itself whether to engage in parliamentary activity or not. Once more, we can discern in the formal program of the Congress, the many confusions and weaknesses that reflected the more general lack of a breaking with Social Democracy. Indeed the support for the "populists in Russia", the endorsement of the decision of London on the question of organisation...

The Congress founded the "Revolutionary Socialist Party", a very contradictory organization to which Most tried later to give a clearer direction, and which defined itself as a branch of the IWMA recently revived in London. Like the former, it was a network of groups all over the country, linked together through the Information Bureau centred in Chicago. This organization remained inactive and virtually dormant until the arrival of Johann Most, who managed to close ranks (7).

Most's life is a permanent attempt to organize revolutionaries, to give a direction to the movement, to centralize activities outside and against Social Democracy. He made tour all over America and held meetings, demos, picnics, etc., in which he defended the need to organize or invited SLP members to argue with them in front of the crowd. In each city where he held meetings and speeches calling the proletarians to organize, new groups sprang up. His aim was to gather the different socialist currents, to gather under the same flag all those who fought for the revolution. It was in the same perspective that Johann Most called for a unification congress of all the new-born groups and the already existing associations. This congress was to take place in Pittsburgh in 1883.

J. Most, Spies, Drury, Parsons, etc. drafted the charter of this Congress, this charter remained in history as "The Pittsburgh Manifesto", also known as the "Pittsburgh Proclamation", and became the charter of revolutionary militants in that period. The Manifesto

opened as follow:

"Fellow Workmen: - The Declaration of Independence says:

'But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them [the people] under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.'

This thought of Thomas Jefferson was the justification for armed resistance by our forefathers, which gave birth to our Republic, and do not necessities of the present time compel us to re-assert their declaration?"

Was the government anything but an oppressor, "a conspiracy of the ruling classes" against the people? demanded the Proclamation. It went on denouncing the capitalist system as "unjust, insane and murderous", condemning the State, the church and the educational system as instruments of "class domination". Time had come *"to totally destroy it with and by all means"*, it declared. Rejecting political reforms because the ruling class would never surrender without fighting, it defended the position that *"the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie must have a violent revolutionary character"*. "So", the Manifesto continued, *"we must agitate for the purpose of organization; organization for the purpose of rebellion"*.

The Manifesto ended as follows:

"The day has come for solidarity. Join ranks! Let the drum beat defiantly the roll of battle: 'Workmen of all countries unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains; you have a world to win!' Tremble, oppressors of the world! Not far beyond your purblind sight there dawns the scarlet and sable lights of the JUDGEMENT DAY!"



The Pittsburgh Manifesto

(7) All the proletarian attempts to centralize and constitute themselves as a force will take the structure of groups organised according to geographical repartition and also according to the language of the participating militants. Maybe the division of the United States into federated states is not alien to this fact. Anyway, the bourgeoisie will use and abuse this weakness, invoking american (sic) nationalism to divide the proletarians and design the strangers (and more particularly the militants of German origin, the more numerous at that moment) as being responsible for all evils.

Besides this real attempt to centralize the militant forces of the country and even the world, the program of the Manifesto carries some reformist demands. First of all when it reproduces part of the Declaration of Independence of the United States, moreover, then when it claims for the improvement of the capitalist system through a better respect of the rights and duties, etc. These weaknesses are in fact the weaknesses of that period. Indeed, almost throughout the whole world, militants believe it is still possible to change the system thanks to the strict application of the Constitution. They think its strict application would wipe-out forever the injustices of this world. They demand equal rights for all and call for the overthrowing of a government that wouldn't respect the Constitution,... Doing so, they are in contradiction with their previous affirmations that defined any government as a conspiracy of the ruling class. The "Manifesto" also contained important theoretical weaknesses as far as the way of organizing was concerned. It proposed a federation of organizations of producers linked by free contracts, without commerce or profit-mongery, etc.

To better understand the internal contradiction and the lack of a break of the revolutionary organisations of that period with Social Democracy, it is important to keep in mind the fact that very few militants were acquainted with the polemics between Marx and Lassalle, knew about Marx's programmatical developments and analysis. Their terrain was the terrain of agitation, speeches, meetings, etc.; they did not deal with the programmatical analysis of the capitalist system, its way of functioning. This lack of comprehension had repercussions on the propositions they made for the future society, and even limited their own struggle. Nevertheless, the federative way of organization declared in the platform of the Pittsburgh Manifesto was denied later by the centralized way in which the different groups that composed the new organization centralized their activities. For the militants who attended the congress, the federative way of organization was considered as an alternative to social democratic centralism; it represented a guarantee against everything they had to confront in the social democratic parties, that is to say bureaucratism, authoritarianism, blind submission, parliamentarism... Federalism is seen as a guarantee against and a response to democratic centralism of social democracy and not (which it really is) as the other side of the same coin that is the democratic way of organization. In the federative way of organization bureaucrats are replaced by elected and revocable delegates (who become soon bureaucrats as well); authoritarianism is replaced by anti-authoritarianism, which, claiming the refusal of any leadership, allows the society to give its own direction; parliamentarism is replaced by assembleism, which has the same basis: the law of the majority and/or the delegation that deprives the proletariat of the possibilities to decide and act giving that the latter are delegated to the so-called "higher" spheres.

The Pittsburgh Congress gathered the delegates of 26 cities, nearly twice as many as the Chicago Congress. And the Pittsburgh Manifesto was issued at the same time in English, German, French, Czech, Spanish and Yiddish.

The Congress proclaimed the death of the Revolutionary Socialist and called itself the "International Working People's Association" because it considered itself as the true successor of the First International contrary to the Second International and in opposition to the latter. And the IWPA really was the heir of the First International, even if this attempt was not, contrary to its predecessor, the expression of an international movement of centralization of class struggle. Indeed, the IWPA was created in a period that we cannot consider as a period of world revolutionary struggles and in this sense it may be considered as a voluntarist attempt. But, one cannot forget that the United States were shaken by a real revolutionary movement to which it tried to give centralization and direction. Therefore, it responded to a real need: the need to centralize struggles and militants and to give them a revolutionary direction.

From 1883 to 1886 the groups of the IWPA multiplied. From 2,000 in 1883 it climbed to 5,000 by the end of 1885 with perhaps three times as many supporters and sympathizers. Chicago remained the centre of the IWPA, which is not by chance. Indeed, Chicago was not only a pole of highly concentrated capital (mines, railways, car factories,...) due to its geographical situation (lake Michigan), but also the place where the class antagonisms were the most obvious, where the police brutality was the most notorious and the economic crisis the most cruel. Chicago had a long tradition of class struggle, but, dramatically, there was a lack of the experience of previous militants' nucleus, a lack of lessons drawn from the previous waves of struggle.

Besides the economic crisis, the acceleration of the mechanization of labour and the intensification of the division of labour changed the management of society. The machinery and the division of labour provoked more sackings and the situation worsened. In 1884, the average cuts amounted to 15 percent and the year after even more, arousing waves of discontent.

In this climate, the IWPA issued pamphlets, leaflets, journals, held meetings, demonstrations, lectures, discussions,... denouncing the capitalist system, the condition of wage-slavery, appealing the workers to wake up and fight against the misery they were living in, to fight for another society. Agitating "the Red Flag of the Commune", their placards said "*No Quarter*", "*Down with governments, god and gold*", "*Exploitation is legalized theft*", "*Workingmen of the world, unite!*". The content of the slogans of the IWPA shows the clear will to destroy the system, contrarily to the slogans of Social Democratic parties that claim the pacific conquest of the State, ballots and elections,... The IWPA (contrarily

to the other organisations of the period such as the Knights of Labor, the Unions, the SLP or later the ALF) proposed to organize not only the proletarians working in the mines or in the factories, but also the unemployed, the "unwanted", the tramps, and others rejected with disdain by reformist organizations. To all the discontented, the IWPA proposed to organize and fight against the misery of this world and those responsible for it.

During those years of crisis, many strikes broke out, nearly all for better wages and (unfortunately often with reformist slogans claiming "the right" to organize) against the repression of proletarian organization. Each time, the State militia opened fire on the strikers and the bosses answered by lockouts, blacklists, strikebreakers, etc. Apart from its work to organize and unite the working-class, the IWPA organized armed sections in many cities. These armed sections, following the model given by the "Lehr-und-Wehr Verein", drilled and instructed their members in procuring arms (guns, knives,...), in using them, in making bombs and grenades, etc. Their purpose was the "*arming of the proletariat and the application of the latest discoveries of science, especially chemistry*", that is to say, they were determined to take an eye for an eye (8). These calls of the IWPA are not to be understood as all the pacifists (intentionally or unintentionally) misinterpret them (as being calls to light class struggle thanks to throwing bombs), but as they are: a real comprehension of the terrorist nature of Capital and of the framework in which struggle against Capital is imposed on us. As Parsons said in a speech about dynamite :

"...It is the peace-maker; it is man's best friend; it emancipates the world from the domineering of the few over the many, because all government, in the last resort, is violence; all law, in the last resort, is force." (our emphasis).

If it is clear for us that dynamite in itself does not emancipate the world, that is has no emancipating virtue in itself, and that it all depends on the hand that throws it, we nevertheless want to stress the fact that at that period all around the world revolutionaries considered dynamite as the weapon par excellence. If we look back at the historical context we can see that dynamite was almost only used by the proletariat, the bourgeoisie preferred using guns and rifles... With this

quotation we wanted to insist on the one hand on the militant comprehension of the nature of all governments and laws, and on the other hand, on the militant comprehension of the necessity to use violent means against bourgeois terror.

The revolutionary militants were convinced that the revolution was around the corner and did whatever they could to be sure this time would be the right time. In the USA, class struggle was so sharp and the climate was so tense that it aroused a deep fear within the bourgeoisie. Its press began to talk of "a new Paris Commune". A huge propaganda effort was launched against the IWPA and its members, who were accused of being assassins, arsonists, bombthrowers, devils,... The fear of the bourgeoisie gives an idea of the strength of the proletarian movement. Revolutionary militants in the USA tried to organize the proletarians struggling against the misery of their living conditions.

In this sense, it seems important to mention that a lot of proletarians arrived in the USA attracted by a myth created in Europe: the myth of "the land of promises", the country of political freedom and work for all, etc. Parsons said in February 1884, when someone told him that America was superior to other countries:

"America is not a free country. The economic conditions of the workers are the same as they are in Europe. A wage slave is a slave everywhere, without any regard to the country he may happen to have been born in or may be living in."

He added that the workers had no other choice but organize and rebel or remain slaves. We can find exactly the same idea in "The Beast of Property" when Most says:

"Indeed it seems as though this young American republic had for the present but one historical mission, of demonstrating beyond controversy to the people on this side of the Atlantic as to those of the other by the presentation of bare, tangible facts what an outrageous monster the 'beast of property' really is, and that neither the condition of the soil nor the vastness of domain, nor the political forms of society can ever alter the viciousness of this beast of prey..." (our emphasis).

(8) Militants of the IWPA call for the using of the progress of science. J.Most in his book "Revolutionary War Science" writes: "To be sure of success, revolutionaries should always have on hand adequate quantity of nitroglycerine, dynamite, hand grenade, and blasting charges..." "Proletarians of all country, arm yourselves! Arm yourselves by whatever means you can. The hour of battle is near."

"The Alarm" and the "Die Arbeiter Zeitung" (two of the fourteen journals of the IWPA) often publish articles such as "The Manufacture of the Dynamite Made Easy" and "Explosive: a Practical Lesson in Popular Chemistry". At that time, all throughout the world, the proletarians use dynamite against their class enemy. Just remember Ravachol in France, at the end of the 19th century, or a few years later, the Bande à Bonnot, etc.



Emblem of the IWPA

In "The Beast of Property", written in the year of the Pittsburgh Congress, the strongest part lies in its denunciation of reformism. First of all the denunciation of "parliamentary windbags", as well as petitions, elections and laws; the denunciation of those who mystify the Economy, all the teachers of political economy, "lackeys of the bourgeoisie", "those charlatans" who try to hide the revolutionary character of the proletariat behind a fairer distribution of richness. Most also denounces, against the current, those Socialists who claim the pacifist and gradual conquest of the power by intellectuals and scientists who will plan everything and more specifically the economy. In other words, the text spits on what Social Democracy praises, on what Social Democracy claims to belong to. "The Beast of Property" claims that the present system is worse than the previous ones: *"But the climax of infamy has been reached by our present 'law and order' system..."*. Against these same specialists, these teachers of economy who claim this society as being the society of the welfare of humanity, Most affirms that this system is worse than the previous ones. It engenders progress indeed, into more barbarity, more capitalism, that is to say that the capitalist progress is reactionary as far as communism is concerned. Educationism and the enlightenment of the masses, cornerstones of the Social Democratic programme, are also denounced and criticised when the text says:

"Some say, general education will bring about a change; but this advise is as a rule and idle phrase. Education of the people will only then be possible when the obstructions there to have been removed. And that will not take place until the entire present system has been destroyed."

The only solution, says Most, is revolution, the communist destruction of this world, and a "society (...) organised on a communistic basis", "everything is ripe for Communism", the text says, and Johann Most does not avoid the most central point; the point that shows his permanent attempts to organize the proletarian struggles outside and against Social Democracy (and this confirms his practical struggle for the centralization of revolutionary forces, negating his own claim for federative based structures): the necessity of a "well

trained revolutionary nucleus". That is to say the necessity of a revolutionary leadership! On this point, Johann Most joins all the revolutionary militants who insisted on the necessity to organize around the highest level of rupture, around a revolutionary vanguard.

The first part of the text, focusing on economy, is in fact quite confused and even sometimes wrong. This is due to the fact that Social Democracy used "marxism" as a bible to justify its defense of the system, therefore revolutionary militants (unable to differentiate between Marx and "marxism") refused to reappropriate Marx's criticisms of society. This led to the situation that the number of militants who had notions of the way the capitalist system functions were very few. This part of the text is an attempt to vulgarize "Capital". A previous attempt of this kind had already been strongly criticised by Marx when Most tried to rewrite "Capital" so as to be understood by everyone. First of all, Marx's Capital was written to be read by proletarians in an organized framework; secondly, Marx also treated the question at another level of abstraction in "Wage labour and Capital" and "Wage, price and profit". These books are excellent examples of the possibility of saying the same thing at different levels of abstraction without betraying the common content. When J. Most tried to write a new version of "Capital", accessible to everyone, he changed the content of the book, its essence, which led him to falsify Marx's positions.

Some will say other weak points exist in this text, and we will not deny it. We are well aware of the weaknesses and the limits of this text, we clearly see that they are due not only to the period but also to the weakness of the rupture with Social Democracy in the historical sense of the term. Nevertheless, the interest of the text exists and lays less in what it says than in what it reveals as an attempt to fight practically against the monopoly Social Democracy claims to hold as far as the organization (we would rather say disorganization) of the proletariat is concerned. Moreover, this text is also a witness of the class struggle movement in the USA. We intend to carry on studying the history of our class struggle in that part of the world and call on our readers to help us by sending criticisms, information, texts,...

"Our American rulers differ not one whit from the despots of all other lands. They all fatten upon the miseries of the people, they all live by despoiling the laborers. The boundary lines, flags, customs and languages of the people of the earth may differ, but the poverty, misery and degradation of the useful class, the producers of the world's wealth, is everywhere the same."

A. Parsons

THE BEAST OF PROPERTY

by J. Most

"Among the beasts of prey, man is certainly the worst." This expression, very commonly made nowadays, is only relatively true. Not man as such, but man in connection with wealth is a beast of prey. The richer a man, the greater his greed for more. We may call such a monster the "beast of property". It now rules the world, makes mankind miserable, and gains in cruelty and voracity with the progress of our so-called "civilization". This monster we will in the following characterize and recommend to extermination.

Look about you! In every so-called "civilized" country there are among every 100 men about 95 more or less destitute and about 5 money-bags.

It is unnecessary to trace all the sneaking ways by which the latter have gained their possessions. The fact that they own all, while the others exist, or rather vegetate merely, admits of no doubt, that these few have grown rich at the expense of the many.

Either by direct brute force, by cunning, or by fraud, this horde has from time to time seized the soil with all its wealth. The laws of inheritance and entail, and the changing of hands, have lent a "venerable" color to this robbery, and consequently mystified and erased the true character of such actions. For this reason, the "beast of property" is not yet fully recognized, but is, on the contrary, worshipped with a holy awe.

And yet, all who do not belong to this class are its victims. Every off-spring of a non-possessor (poor man) finds every nook and corner of the earth occupied at his entrance into this world. There is nothing which is "lordless". Without labor nothing is produced; and in order to labor, there are required not only ability and will, but also room to work, tools, raw materials and means of sustenance. The poor man must, therefore, by force of necessity, apply to those who possess these things in plenty. And, behold! the rich give him permission to continue his existence. But in return for this he must divest himself of his skill and power. These qualities henceforth his pretended "saviors" use for themselves. They place him under the yoke of labor - they force him to the utmost of his mental and physical

abilities to produce new treasures, which however he is not entitled to own. Should he desire to deliberate long before making so unequal contract, his growling stomach will soon convince him that the poor man has no time for that, for there are millions in the same position as himself and he will risk that, while deliberating, hundreds of others will apply - his chance is gone and he again will be at the mercy of the winds.

It is the lash of hunger which compels the poor man to submit. In order to live he must sell "voluntarily" sell- himself every day and hour to the "beast of property".

The bygone times, when the "ruling" classes, on their slave-hunting raids, threw their victims in chains and forced them to work, of which the rulers had all the benefit - the times when christian-germanic robbers stole entire countries, deprived the inhabitants of the soil, and pressed them to feudal service, were indeed terrible enough. But the climax of infamy has been reached by our present "law and order" system, for it has defrauded more than nine-tenths of mankind of their means of existence, reduced them to dependence upon an insignificant minority, and condemned them to self-sacrifice. At the same time it has disguised this relation with all sorts of jugglery that the thralls of today - the wage slaves - but partially recognize their serfdom and outlawed position, they rather incline to ascribe it to the caprices of fortune.

To perpetuate this state of affairs is the only aim of the "prominent" classes. Though not always united among themselves - one seeking to gain advantage over the other by tricks of trade, cunning in speculation and diverse machinations of competition - yet in opposition to the proletariat they stand in one united hostile phalanx. Their political ideal is, therefore - in spite of all phrases - a most powerful, centralized and brutal beadle government.

If the poor man, who is momentarily unable to sell himself to an exploiter of labor, or is already flayed to complete helplessness by the "beast of property", has recourse to begging -then the gluttoned bourgeois terms

it vagrancy, and calls for police; he demands pillory and prison for the poor devil who refuses to starve between mountains of food.

Should the unemployed apply a little of the much vaunted self-help, that is, should he do in a small way, what the rich do daily with impunity on a grand scale, should he, in fact, steal, in order to live - the bourgeoisie will heap burning coals of "moral indignation" upon his head, and, with austere visage, hand him over relentlessly in charge of the State, that in its prisons he may be fleeced the more effectively, i.e., cheaper.

When the workers combine in order to obtain better wages, shorter hours of labor, or similar advantages, the money-bags immediately decry it as "conspiracy", which must be prevented.

When the workers organize politically, it is denounced as resistance to the "divine" order of things, which must be nullified by laws or exception or discrimination.

Should the people finally contemplate rebellion, an unceasing howl of rage raised by the "gold tigers" will be heard throughout the world - their pant for massacres and their thirst for blood is insatiable.

The life of the poor man is valued as nothing by the rich. As the owner of vessels he places the lives of entire crews in jeopardy, when his object is to fraudulently obtain high insurance for half decayed hulks. Bad ventilation, deep excavation, defective supports, etc., etc., annually bring death to thousands of miners, but this system of operation saves expenses, therefore augments the gains, and gives the mine owners no occasion to be sorry. Neither does the factory-pasha care how many of "his" laborers are torn and rent apart by machinery, poisoned by chemicals, or slowly suffocated by dirt and dust. Profit is the main thing.

Women are cheaper than men: for this reason the capitalistic vampires with insatiate rapacity seek their blood. Besides, female labor procures them cheap mistresses.

Child flesh is the cheapest: what wonder then that the cannibals of modern society continually feast upon juvenile victims? What care they that the poor little ones are thereby bodily crippled and mentally ruined for life - that thousands of them, miserable and worn out at a tender age, sink into their graves? Stocks rise; that suffices.

As the bourgeoisie, by means of its capital, completely monopolizes all new inventions, every new machine, instead of shortening the hours of labor and enhancing the prosperity and happiness of all, causes, on the contrary, dismissal from employment for some, reduction of wages for others and an increased and intensified state of misery for the entire proletariat.

When increase of production is accompanied by an augmented pauperization of the masses, consumption must simultaneously decrease, stagnation and crises must ensue. A superabundance of actual wealth in the hands of the few must create hunger, typhus, and other epidemics among the many. The injustice - yea the idiocy - of this state of affairs is evident. The money-bags of course merely shrug their shoulders. This they will continue to do until a rope well tied over their shoulders will end all further shrugging.

The worker is not only fleeced in manifold ways as producer, but also as consumer. Numberless parasites seek to despoil him of his paltry income.

After products have passed through various exchanges and storage and their prices have been raised by jobbers and brokers' profits, by taxes and custom house duties, they finally reach the retailers, whose customers are almost exclusively the proletarians. The wholesalers "make" (that is, fraudulently obtain) perhaps 10 to 20 per cent profit by their transactions; the retailer is dissatisfied with less than 100 percent. He makes use of all sorts of tricks for securing this result, especially the most shameless adulteration of food. In close relationship to these swindlers are the numberless poisoners and adulterators of beer, liquors, wine, etc., who render the streets in all our great cities and industrial centers unsafe with their nefarious traffic. Then there are the tenement-lords, who ceaselessly seek means to embitter the existence of the poor. The condition of the rooms becomes steadily worse, the rents higher, and the contracts more galling. The workers are crowded together more and more into rear houses, attics and cellar-holes full of vermin, damp and musty. Prison cells are frequently far healthier than these pest-holes.

When the worker is out of employment, he is again at the mercy of a horde of speculators in hunger, who are ready to pounce on him in order to complete his ruin. Pawnbrokers and others of similar ilk advance small sums at high interest on the last possessions of the poor. Their contracts are usually so arranged that they can hardly be kept: the pawned objects are forfeited and the poor wretch takes another downward step. The cut-throats, however, amass fortunes in a short time. The beggar is looked upon as quite a well-paying figure by certain sharks. Every copper which he has gathered in his unenviable way arouses the covetousness of the keeper of dirty holes and vile dens. Even thieves are subject to this capitalistic spoliation. They are the slaves of crafty concealers and "fences", who receive their stolen goods for a song. Yes! even those unfortunate women, whom the present accursed system has driven to prostitution, are shamelessly plundered by keepers of brothels and "houses of ill-fame."

This is the lot of the poor from the cradle to the grave. Whether he produces or consumes, whether he exists or merely vegetates, he is always surrounded by

ravenous vampires who thirst for his last drop of blood. On the other hand, the rich man never stops his work of exploiting, though he may be utterly unable to assign a reason for his greed. He that has \$1,000,000 would have \$10,000,000; he that has \$100,000,000 would have \$1,000,000,000.

The greed for wealth is closely associated with the greed for power. Wealth is not only a generator of more wealth, it is also a political power. Under the present capitalistic system venality is an all-pervading vice. It is as a rule a mere matter of price which will buy over those who may be of service either by speech or silence, by pen or by press, by acts of violence or any other means, to the "beast of property" which by its golden dictates is the absolute, almighty divinity.

In Europe and America there are several hundred thousand priests and ministers, specially provided for to poison the common sense of the masses. Numberless missionaries wander from house to house spreading senseless tracts, or commit other "spiritual" mischief. In the schools strenuous attempts are made to nullify what little good the training in reading, writing, and ciphering may bring with it. Idiotic maltreatment of "history" excites that blatant prejudice which divides people, and prevents them from recognizing the fact, that their oppressors have long ago leagued together against them, and that all politics, past and present, has the only object in view of firmly establishing the power of the rulers, and thereby ensuring exploitation of the poor by the rich.

The hawking trade in "loyalty and order intoxicants" is attended to by the inkslingers of the daily press, numerous literary perverters of history, by political heelers of the various predominating cliques, rings, combinations and organizations, by parliamentary windbags with seductive smiles, pledges on their lips and treason in their hearts, and hundreds of other politicians of all degrees and shades of villainy.

Whole squads of bushwackers are specially employed in mystifying the social question. The professors of political economy for instance, play the part of lackeys to the bourgeoisie, extolling the golden calf as the true sun of life, and using falsehood and knavery so "scientifically", that they make the tanning of workingmen's hides appear as a benefaction to mankind. Some of those charlatans recommend social reform, or in other words, processes, based on the maxim of washing without wetting; not to mention their celebrated recipes for economizing and educating.

While thus bamboozling the masses the capitalistic knights of plunder continue to perfect their mechanism of power. New offices are created. High positions in these are filled in Europe by the progeny of the former highwaymen (now a "nobleman") in America by the most crafty office hunters and the most wily thieves, who combine with their original purpose of authoritatively gagging the proletariat, the very pleasant business of till-tapping and forgery on a grand scale. They command armies of soldiers, gendarmes, policemen, spies, judges, prison-keepers, toll-keepers, tax collectors, executors, etc., etc. The lower class of the beadledom are almost wholly recruited from the ranks of the non-possessors, and are only rarely better paid. For all that they display great zeal as spies, eavesdroppers, and pokenoses, as claws, teeth and suckers of the State, which institution is evidently nothing more nor less than the political organization of a horde of swindlers and spoliators, who without the tyrannizing machinery could not exist for one day before the just wrath and condemnation of the oppressed and plundered people.

In most of the old countries this system has naturally reached its points of culmination in the outer form. The entire disciplinary apparatus of the State concentrates in a monarchic power. Its representatives "by the grace of God" are, in accordance, the very quintessence of villainy. In them all vice and crime common to the ruling classes is developed to a monstrous degree. Their most agreeable occupation is a wholesale murder (war); when they rob, and they do it often, they always rob entire countries and hundreds, even thousands of millions. Incendiary on a colossal scale serves to illuminate their atrocities. They adhere to the notion that mankind exists for them to kick, cuff, and spit upon....



By direct blackmail these crowned murderers of Europe annually pocket \$50,000,000. Militarism, their pet progeny, annually costs \$1,000,000,000, not taking in consideration the loss of life and labor. An equal sum is paid as interest on \$20,000,000,000 of state-debts, which these scoundrels have incurred in a comparatively short time. Monarchism in Europe then cost annually \$2,050,000,000 that is to say, more than 10,000,000 of workers, the supporters of 50,000,000 of people, earn as wages in the same time.

In America the place of the monarchs is filled by the monopolists. Should monopolism in the alleged "free" United States of America develop at the rate it has in the last quarter of century, there will remain free from monopolization only daylight and air. Five hundred million acres of land in the United States, about

six times the area of Great Britain and Ireland, have been divided within a generation among the railroad companies and the great landlords of Europeo-aristocratic origin. Within a few decades Vanderbilt alone amassed \$200,000,000; several dozen of his competitors in robbery bid fair to outdo him. San Francisco was settled hardly thirty years ago, today it harbors eighty-five millionaires! All the wealth of this great republic, although established but a century, its mines, its coal-fields, its oilwells, etc., etc., has been "taken" from the people and is the property of a handful of daring adventurers and cunning schemers.

The "sovereignty of the people" falls prostrate into the dust before the influence of these money kings, railroad magnates, coal barons and factory lords. These fellows carry the whole United States in their pockets, and that which is vaunted as untrammeled legislation and free ballot is a farce, a delusion and a snare.

If this be the condition of the green wood, what may we not expect of the decayed timber? If this young American republic, with its nearly boundless territory and its almost inexhaustible natural resources has been so fatally corrupted and ruined in such a short time by the capitalistic system - why be surprised at the results of long continued abuses of similar nature in servile, rotten Europe?

Indeed it seems as though this young American republic had for the present but one historical mission, of demonstrating beyond controversy to the people on this side of the Atlantic as to those on the other by the presentation of bare, tangible facts what an outrageous monster the "beast of property" really is, and that neither the condition of the soil nor the vastness of domain, nor the political forms of society can ever alter the viciousness of this beast of prey; but to the contrary, it proves that the less a necessity naturally exists for individual greed and rapacity, the more dangerous to, and obtrusive upon society it becomes. It is not voracious to satisfy its wants - it devours for the sake of devouring only!

Let those who labor to live understand that this monster cannot be tamed, nor be made harmless or useful to man; let them learn to know that there is but one means of safety: unrelenting, pitiless, thorough war of extermination! Gentle overtures are for naught; scorn and derision will be the result, if by petitions, elections, and like silly attempts the proletariat hopes to command the respect of its sworn enemies.

Some say, general education will bring about a change; but this advice is as a rule an idle phrase. Education of the people will only then be possible, when the obstructions there to have been removed. And that will not take place until the entire present system has been destroyed.

But let it not be understood that nothing could or should be done by education. Far from it. Whoever has recognized the villainy of the present conditions, is in duty bound to raise his voice, in order to expose them, and thereby open the eyes of the people. Only avoid to reach this result by super-scientific reflections. Let us leave this to those well meaning scientists, who in this manner tear the mask of humanity from the "better class" and disclose the hideous countenance of the beast of prey. The language of and to the proletariat must be clear and forcible.

Whoever thus uses speech will be accused of inciting disturbance by the governing rabble; he will be bitterly hated and persecuted. This shows that the only possible and practical enlightenment must be of an inciting nature. Then let us incite!

Let us show the people how it is swindled out of its labor force by country and city capitalists; how it is eunched out of its meagre wages by the house, store, and other lords; how priests of pulpit, press, and party seek to destroy its intellect; how a brutal police is ever ready to maltreat and tyrannize it, and with a soldiery to spill its blood. Patience, at last must forsake it! The people will rebel and crush its foes.

The revolution of the proletariat - the war of the poor against the rich, is the only way from oppression to deliverance.

But, some interpose, revolutions can not be made! Certainly not, but they can be prepared for by directing the people's attention to the fact that such events are imminent, and calling upon them to be ready for all emergencies.

Capitalistic development, of which many theorists assert that it must proceed to the total extinction of the middle class (small bourgeoisie), before the conditions favorable to a social revolution are at hand, has reached such a point of perfection that its farther progress is almost impossible. Universal production (in civilized countries) can only be carried on, industrially as well as agriculturally, on a grand scale, when society is organized on a Communistic basis, and when (which



THE GOLDEN RULE

will then be a truism) the reduction of the hours of labor keeps pace with the development of technical facilities, and augmented consumption with production.

This is easily comprehended. By wholesale production from 10 to 100 times more may be produced than the producers need in goods of equivalent value, and there lies the rub. Until lately, this entire surplus value has been but little noticed, because by far the greater portion of this so-called profit has been in turn capitalized, that is, used for new capitalistic enterprises, and because the industrially most advanced countries (the "beast of property" in those countries) export enormous quantities of merchandise. Now, however, the thing is beginning to weaken mightily. Industrialism has made great progress the world over, balancing exports and imports more and more, and for that reason new

investments of capital become less profitable, and must, under such circumstances, soon prove entirely unremunerative. Universal crises must ensue and will expose these glaring incongruities.

Everything therefore is ripe for Communism; it is only necessary to remove its interested inveterate enemies, the capitalists and their abettors. During these crises the people will become sufficiently prepared for the struggle. Everything will then depend on the presence of a well trained revolutionary nucleus at all points, which is fit and able to crystallize around itself the masses of the people, driven to rebellion by misery and want of work, and which can then apply the mighty forces so formed to the destruction of all existing hostile institutions...

The working people thirst for the truths of Socialism and welcome their utterance with shouts of delight. It only lacks organisation and preparation, and the time for the social revolt is at hand. Their miseries have become unendurable, and their necessities will soon compel them to act, whether they are prepared or not. Let us redouble our efforts and make ready for the inevitable. Let us strain every nerve to awaken the people to the dangers of the coming storm between the propertied and the propertyless classes of America. To this work let our lives be devoted.
Vive la révolution sociale !

A. Parsons

Communism as the positive transcendence of private property as **human self-estrangement**, and therefore as the real appropriation of the **human essence** by and for man; communism therefore as the complete return of man to himself as a **social** (i.e. human) being - a return accomplished consciously and embracing the entire wealth of previous development. This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism; it is the **genuine** resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man - the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution.

Karl Marx,
Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844